



(12) **United States Patent**
Coutu et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 10,928,082 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Feb. 23, 2021**

(54) **ENERGY EXCHANGE SYSTEM FOR
CONDITIONING AIR IN AN ENCLOSED
STRUCTURE**

F24F 2003/1435 (2013.01); *Y02B 30/52*
(2013.01); *Y02B 30/56* (2013.01)

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC combination set(s) only.
See application file for complete search history.

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 505 days.

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(21) Appl. No.: **15/185,180**

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(22) Filed: **Jun. 17, 2016**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2016/0290666 A1 Oct. 6, 2016

Related U.S. Application Data

(62) Division of application No. 13/449,598, filed on Apr.
18, 2012, now Pat. No. 9,810,439.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/530,810, filed on Sep.
2, 2011, provisional application No. 61/584,617, filed
on Jan. 9, 2012.

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
F24F 3/00 (2006.01)
F24F 3/14 (2006.01)
F24F 3/147 (2006.01)
F28D 19/04 (2006.01)
F28D 21/00 (2006.01)
F24F 12/00 (2006.01)

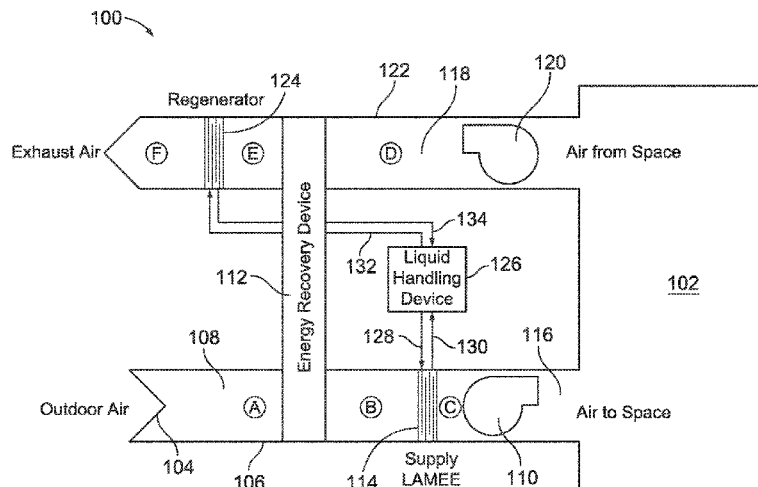
(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **F24F 3/1417** (2013.01); **F24F 3/147**
(2013.01); **F24F 12/002** (2013.01); **F28D**
19/042 (2013.01); **F28D 21/0015** (2013.01);

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An energy exchange system that includes a supply air flow
path, an exhaust air flow path, an energy recovery device
disposed within the supply and exhaust air flow paths, and
a supply conditioning unit disposed within the supply air
flow path. The supply conditioning unit may be downstream
from the energy recovery device.

11 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets



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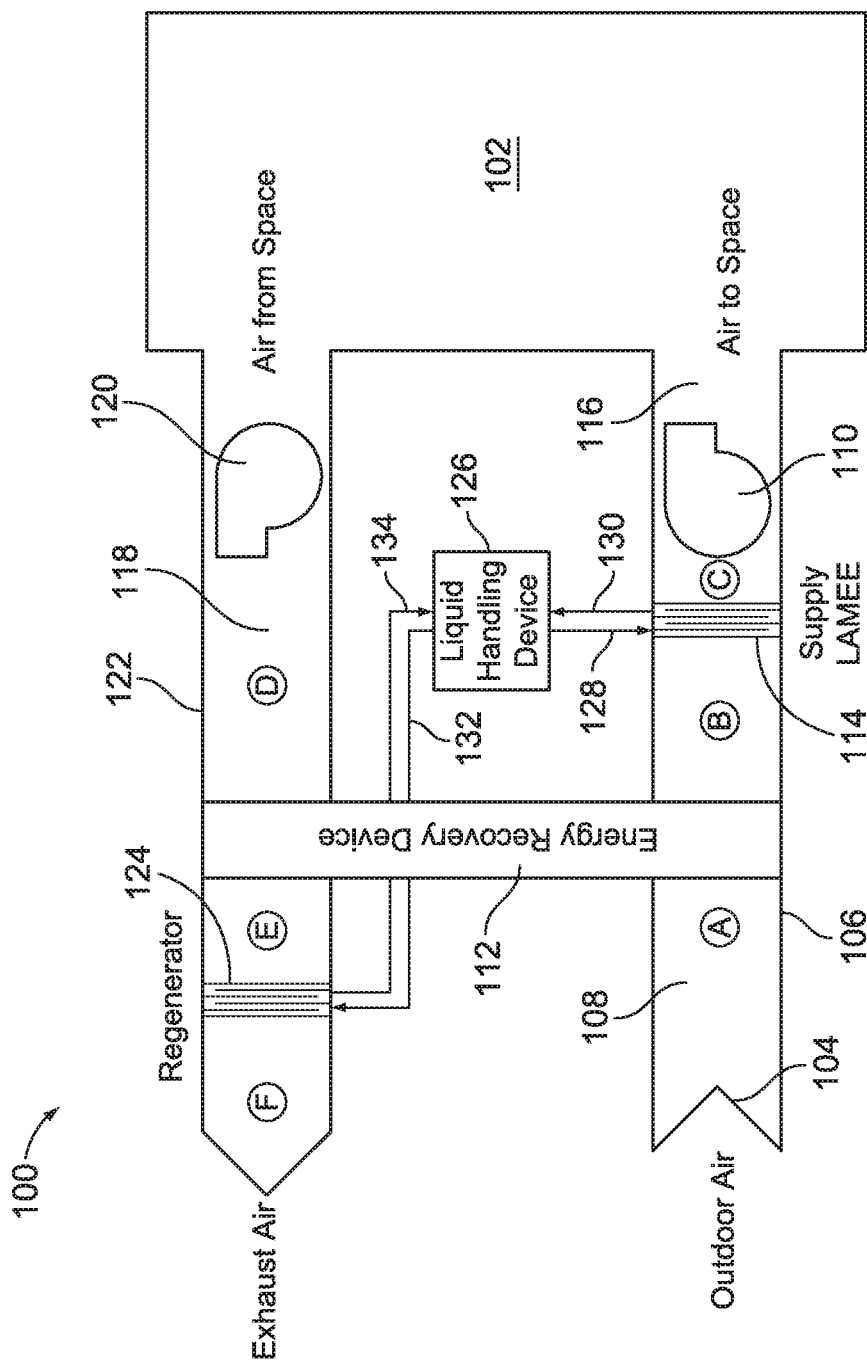


FIG. 1

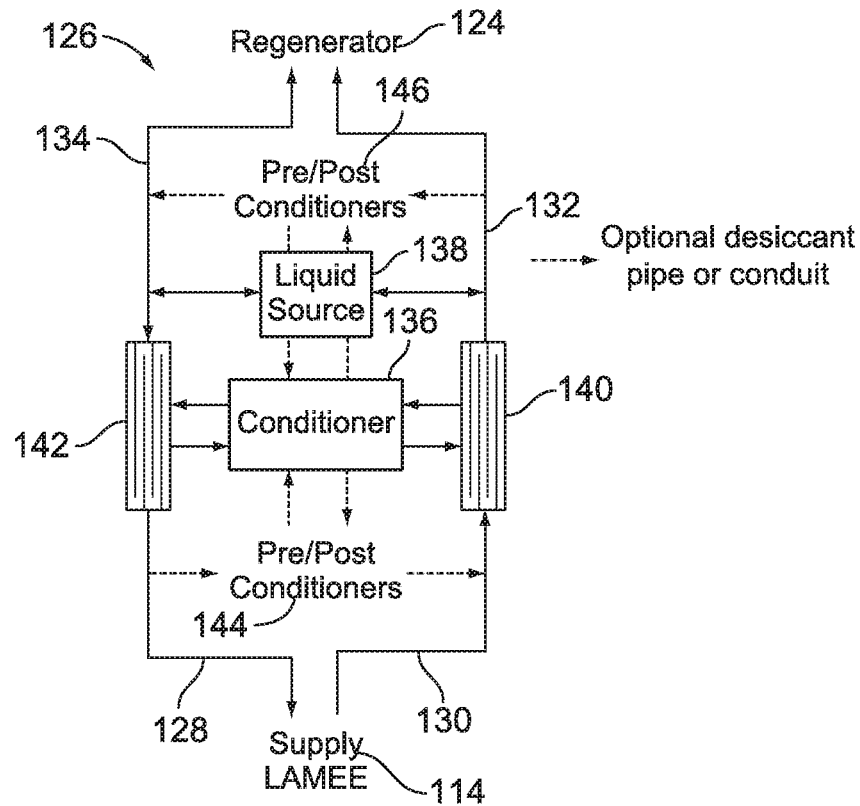


FIG. 2

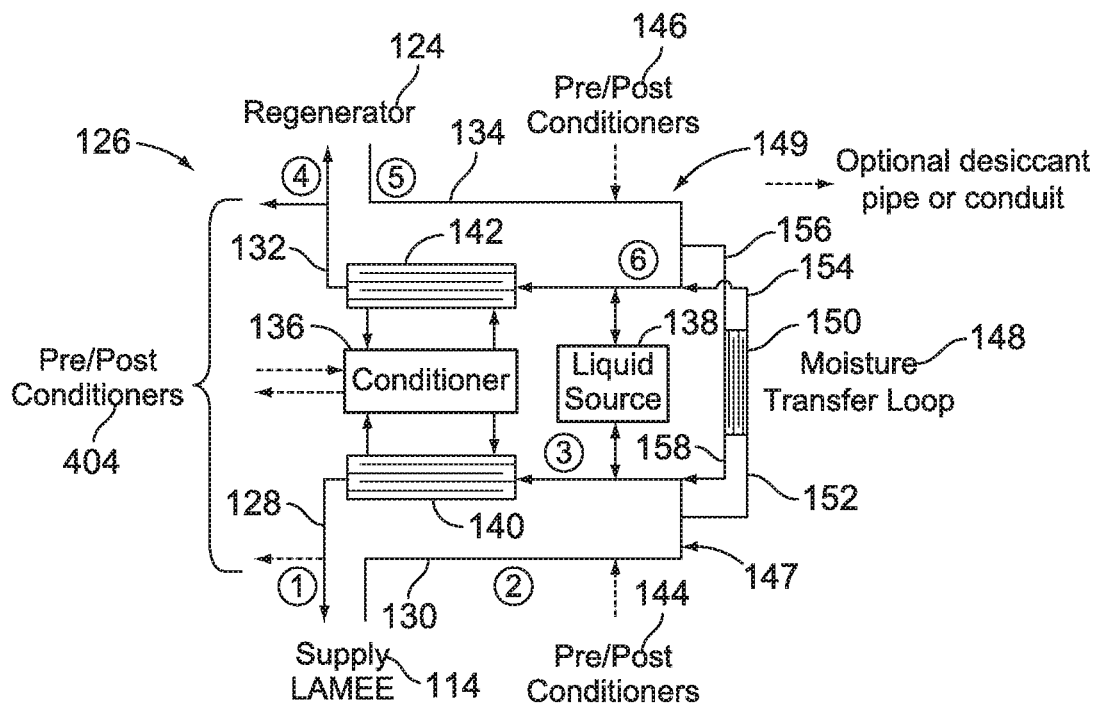


FIG. 3

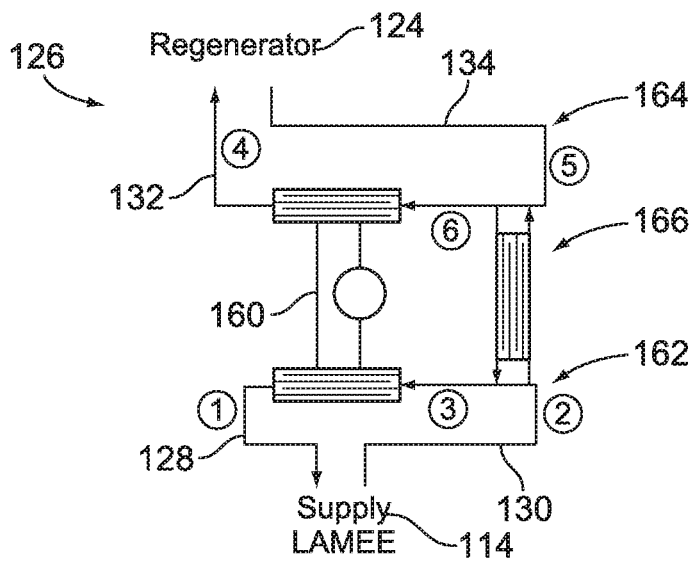


FIG. 4

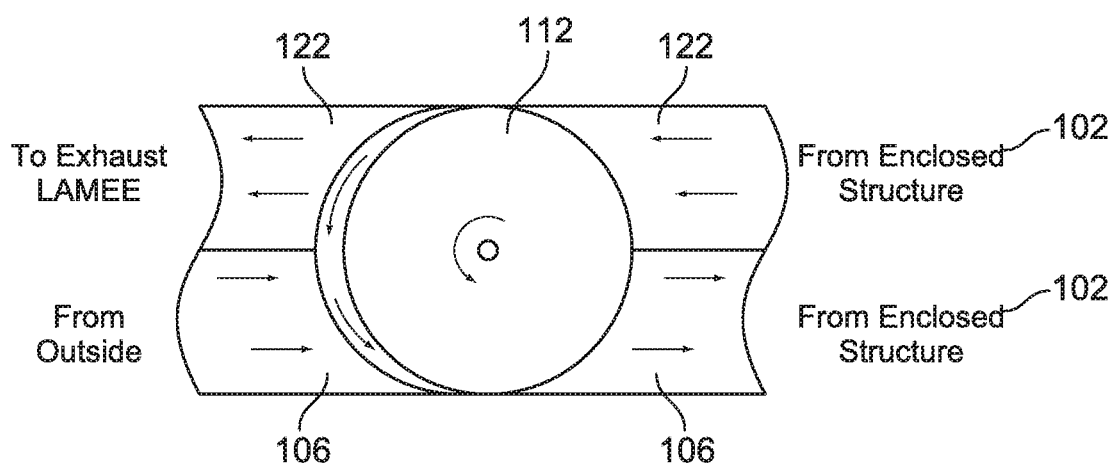


FIG. 5

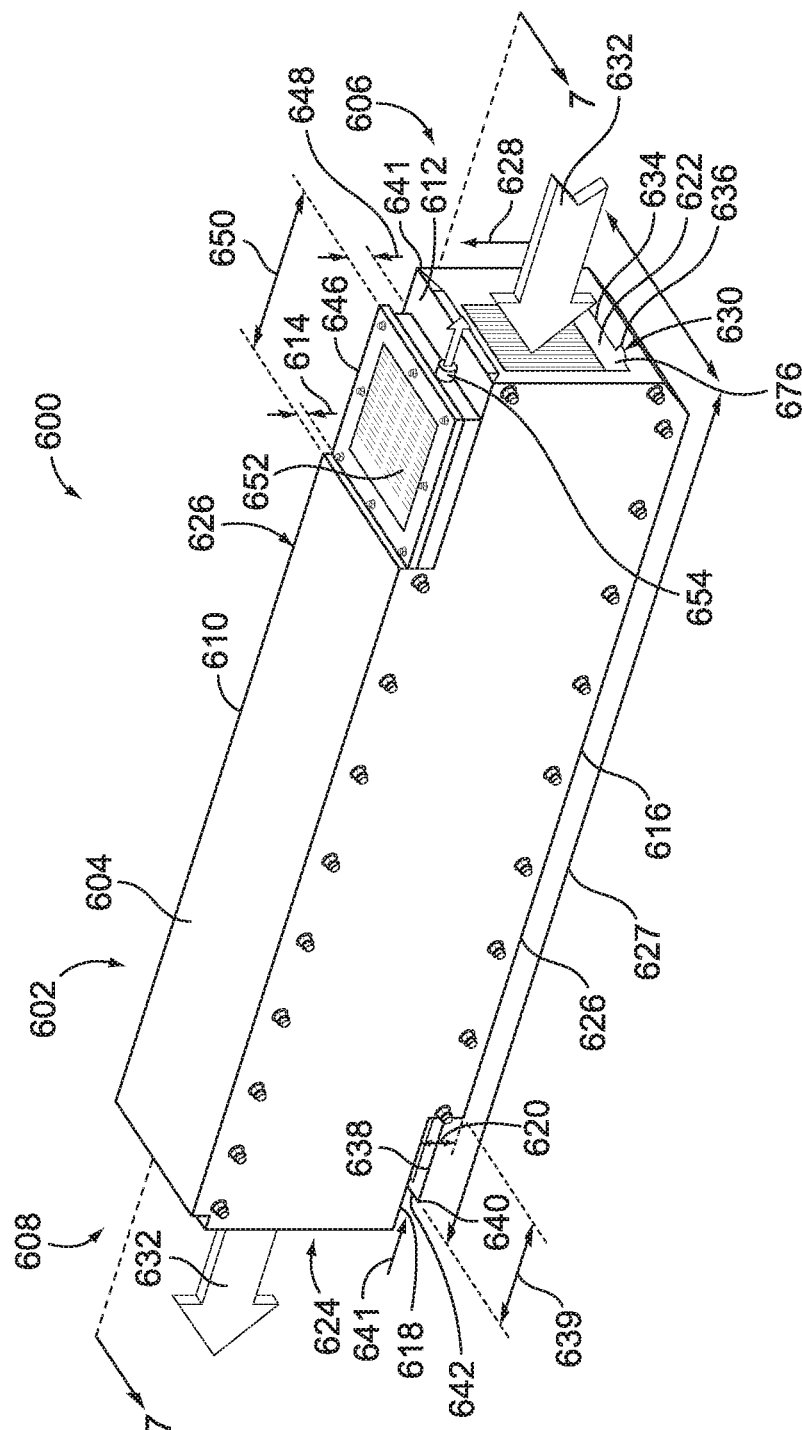


FIG. 6

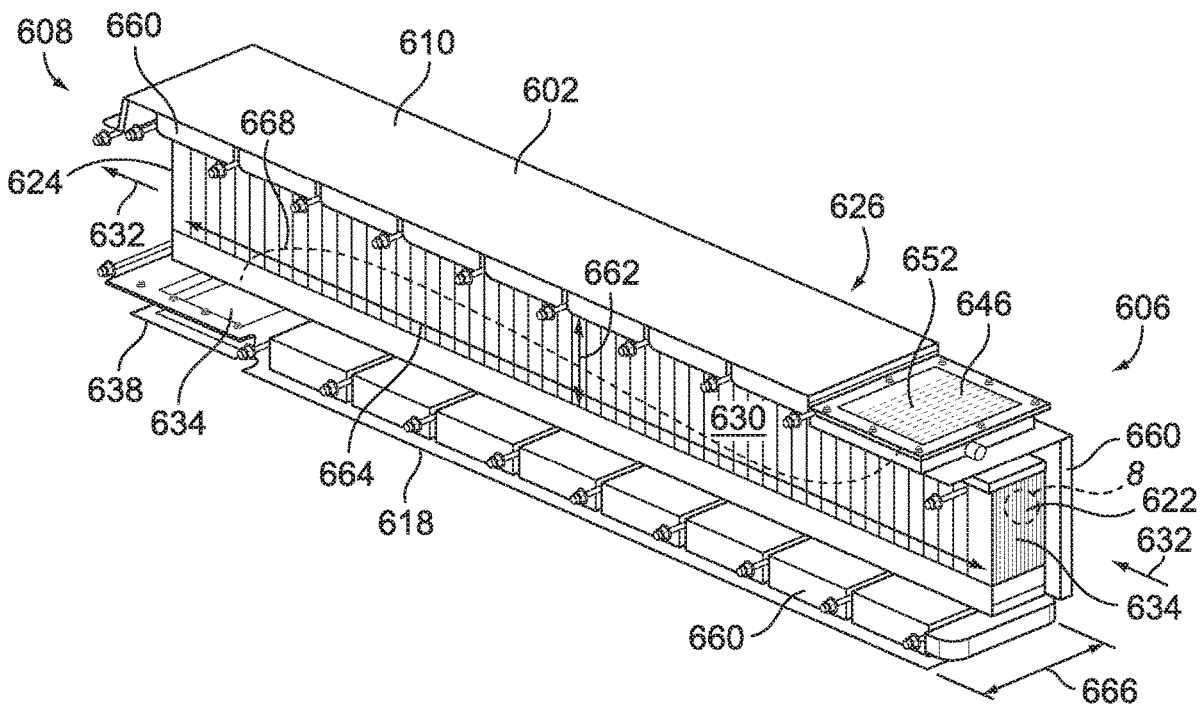


FIG. 7

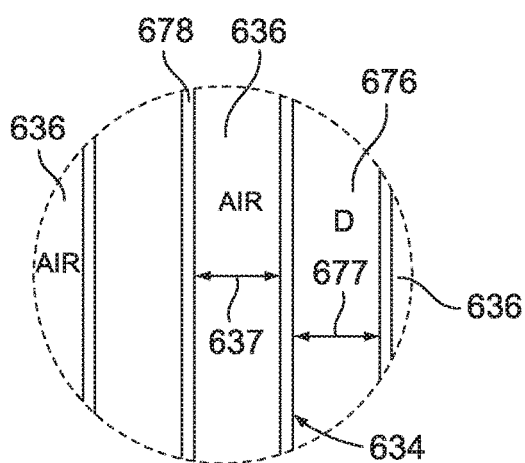


FIG. 8

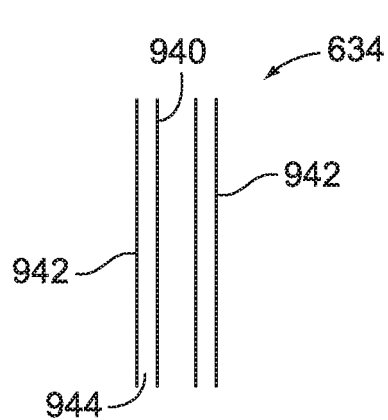


FIG. 9

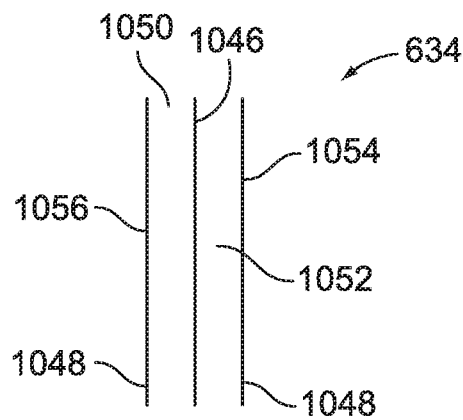


FIG. 10

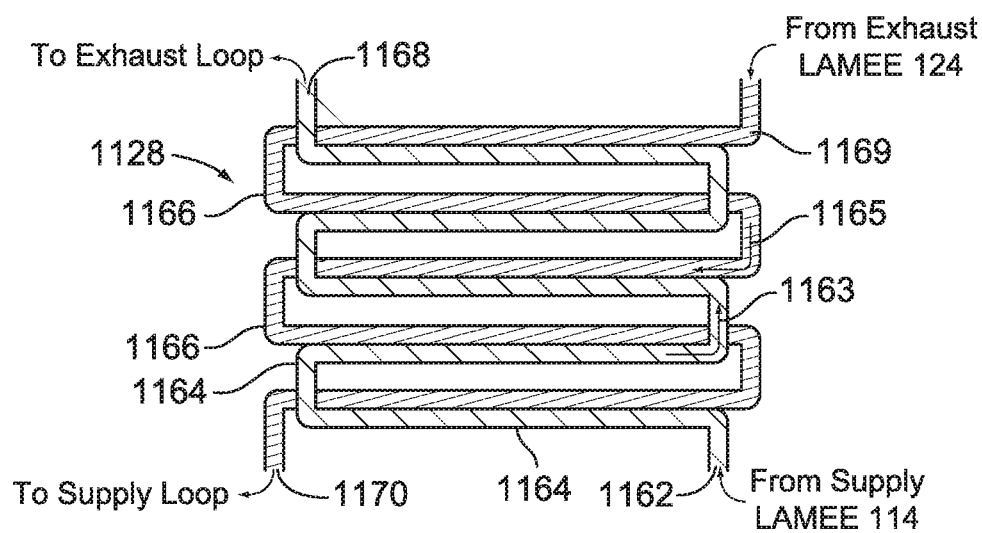


FIG. 11

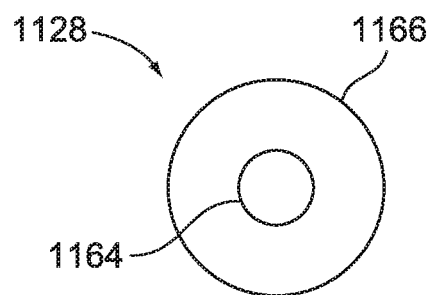


FIG. 12

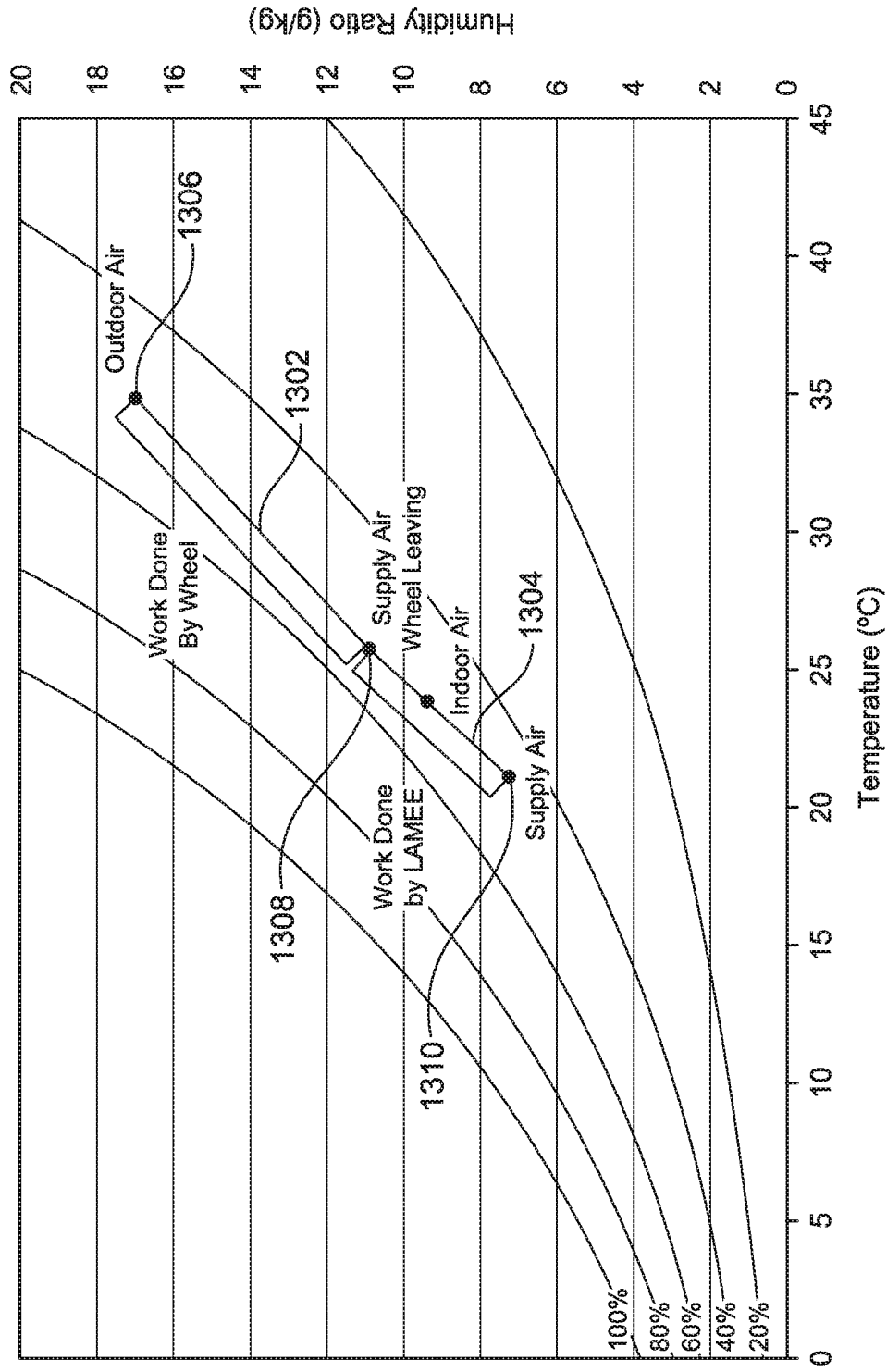


FIG. 13

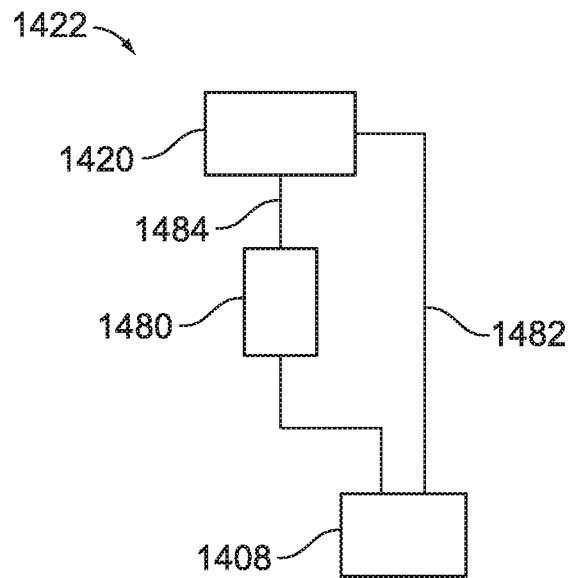


FIG. 14

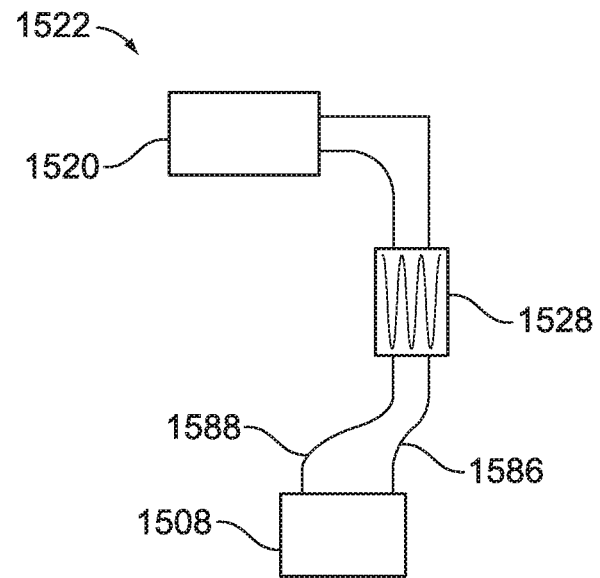


FIG. 15

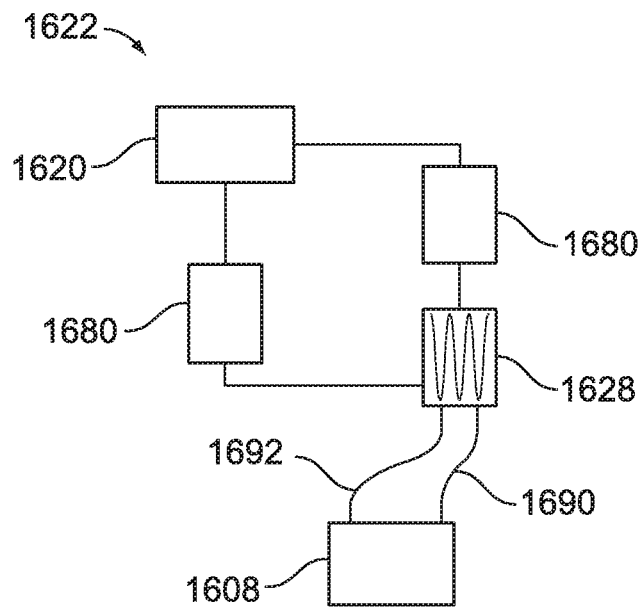


FIG. 16

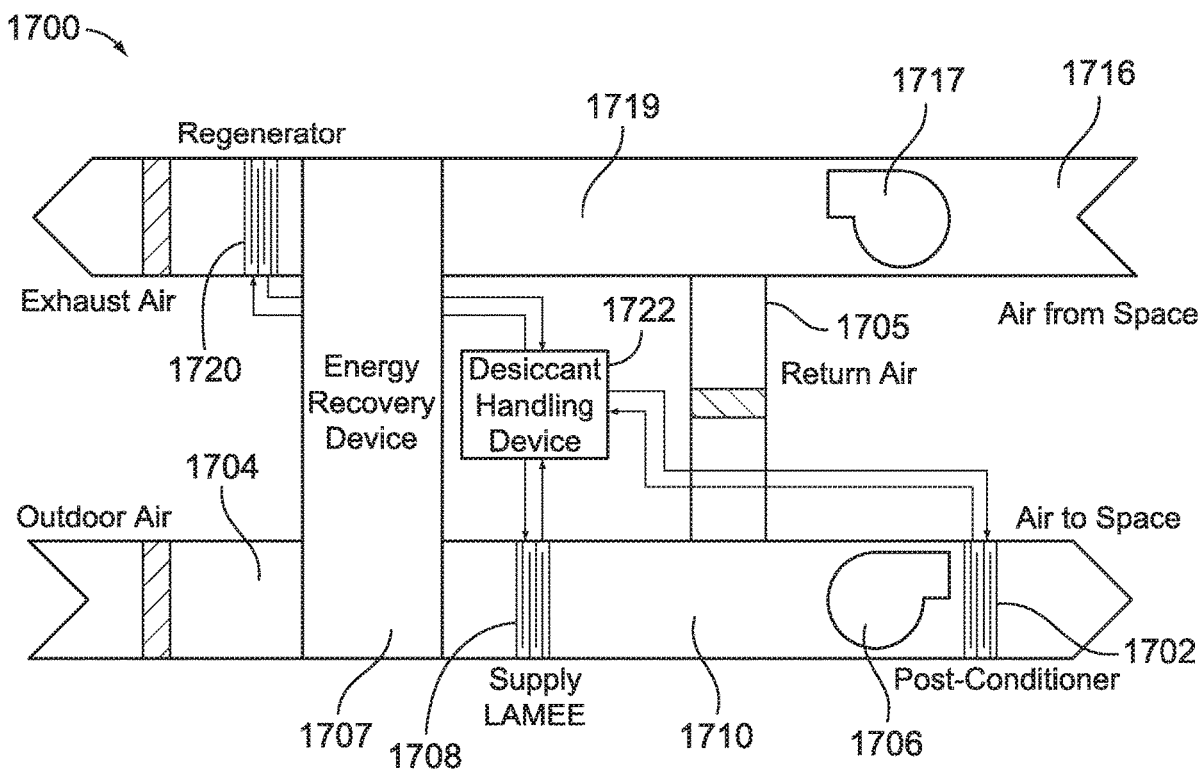


FIG. 17

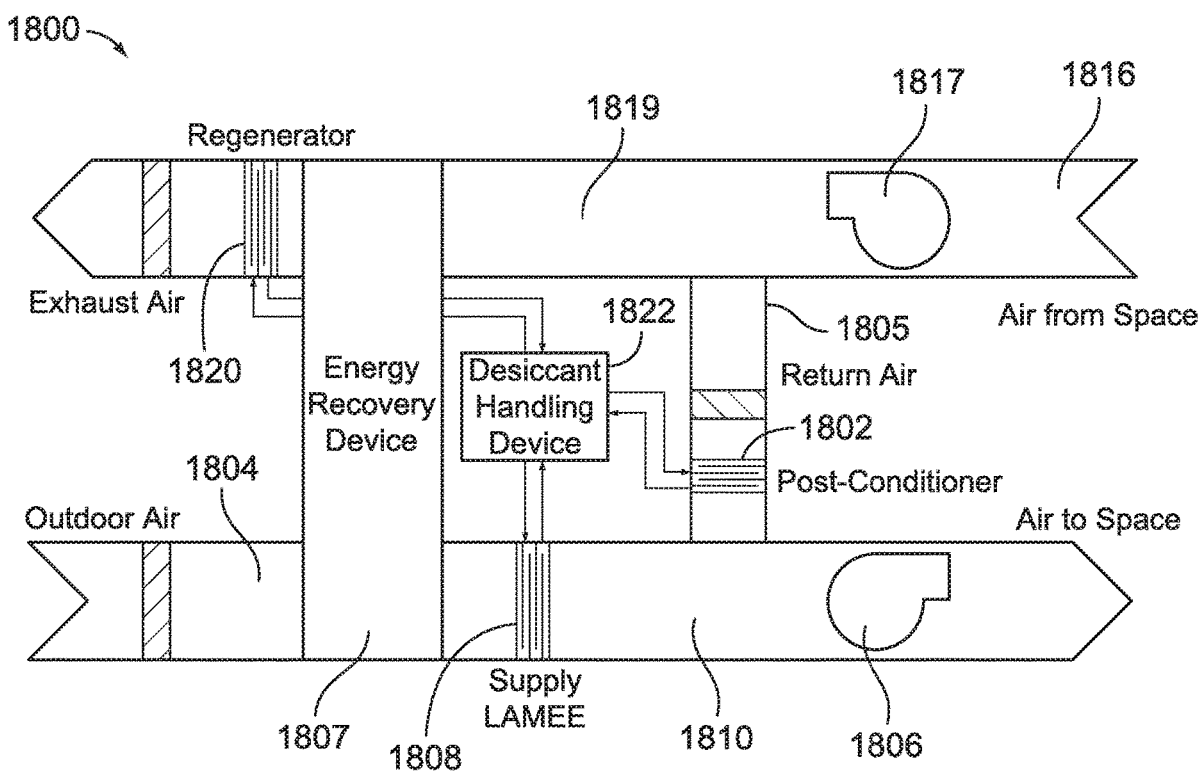


FIG. 18

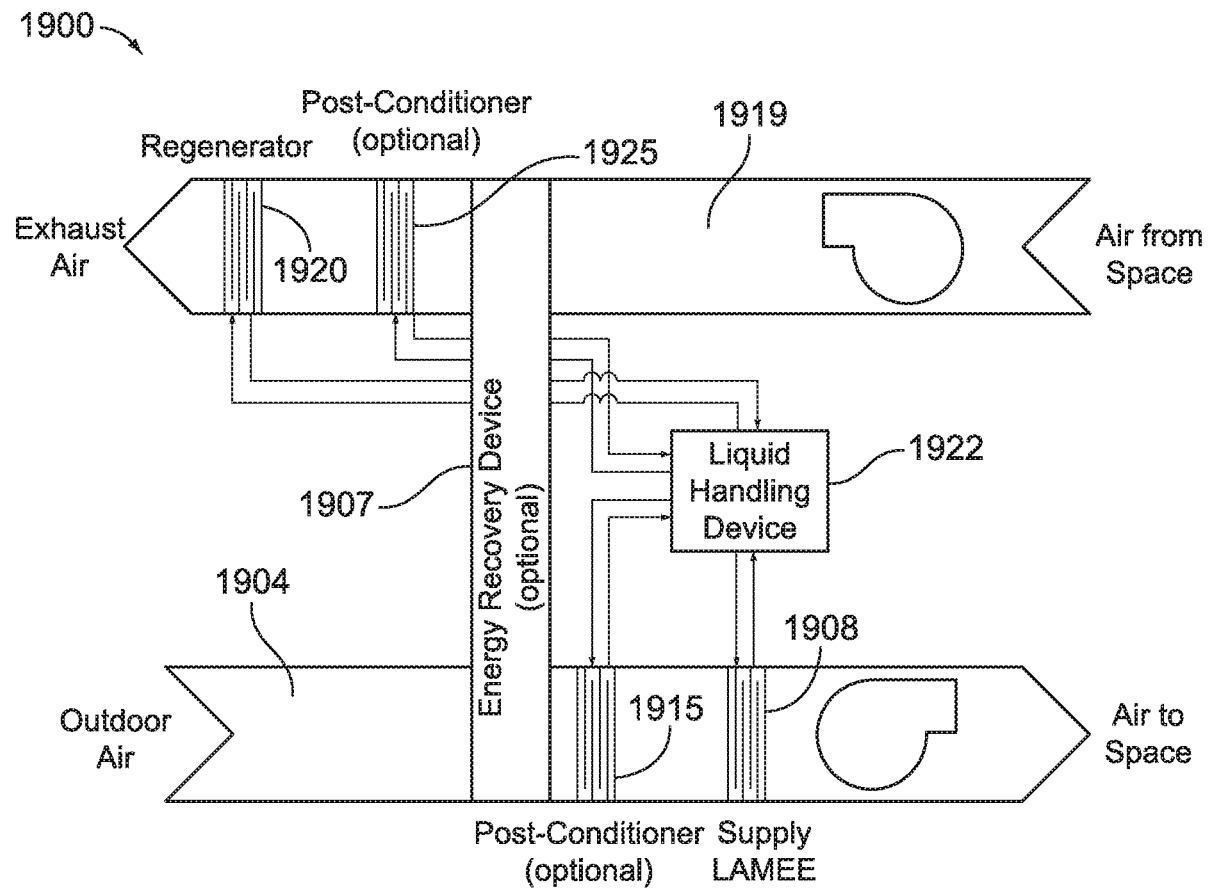


FIG. 19

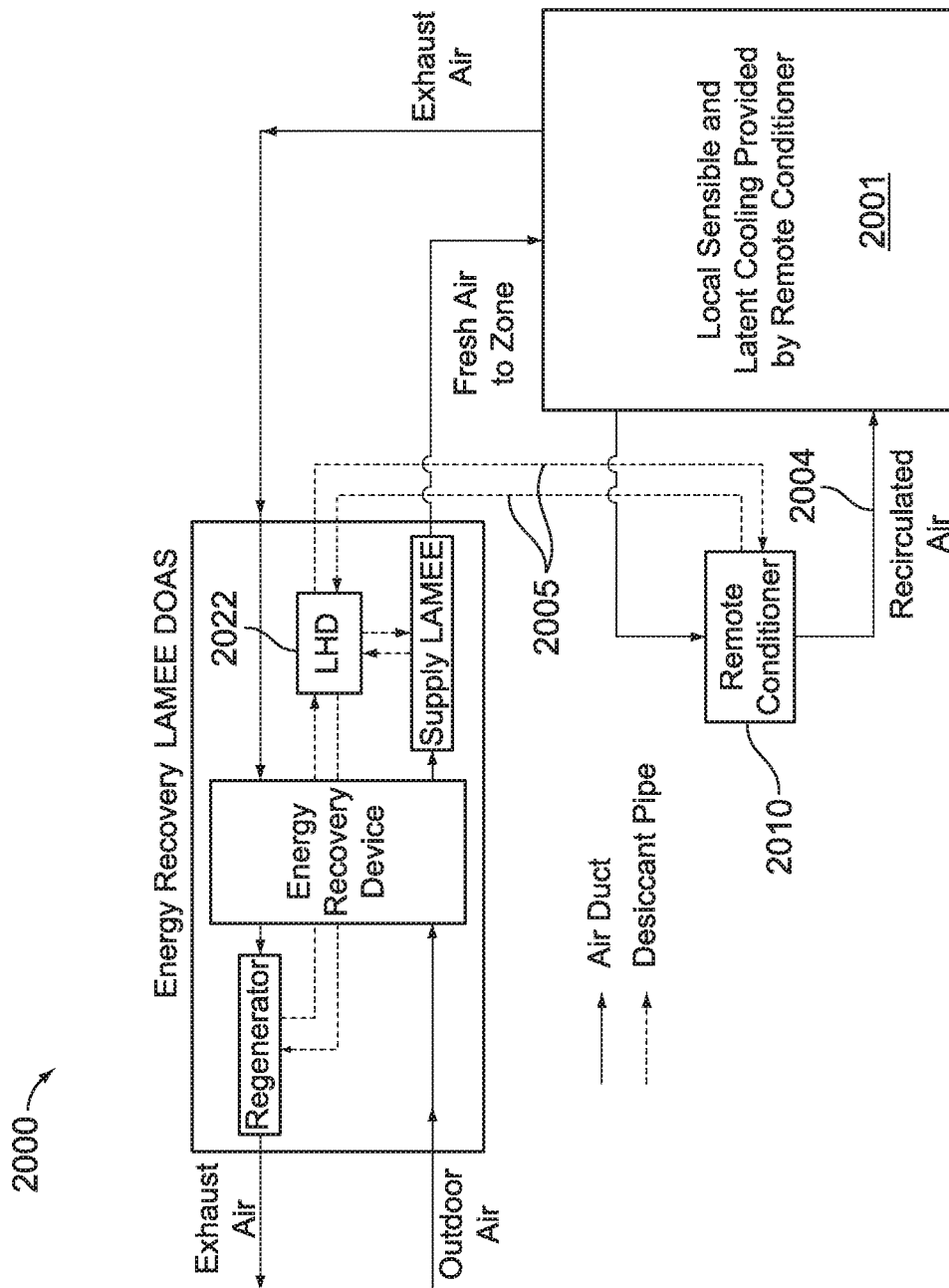


FIG. 20

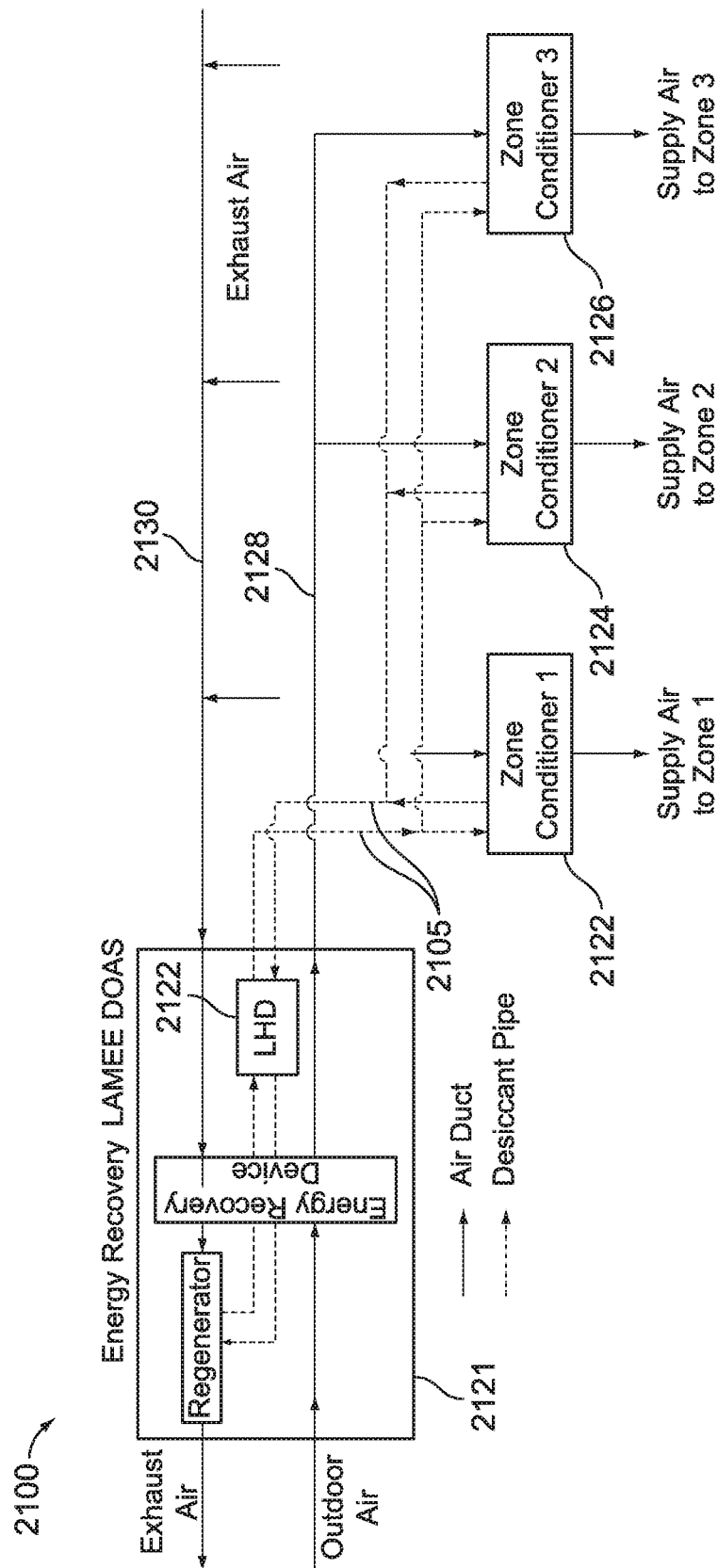


FIG. 21

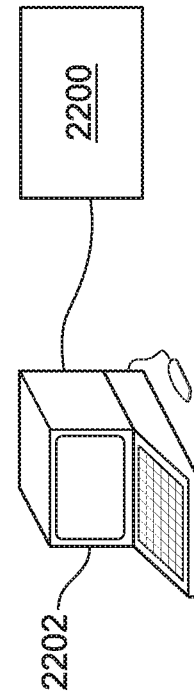


FIG. 22

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ENERGY EXCHANGE SYSTEM FOR CONDITIONING AIR IN AN ENCLOSED STRUCTURE

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

The present application is a division of U.S. application Ser. No. 13/449,598 filed Apr. 18, 2012, entitled "Energy Exchange System for Conditioning Air in an Enclosed Structure," which, in turn, claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/530,810 filed Sep. 2, 2011, entitled "Energy Exchange System for Conditioning Air in an Enclosed Structure," and U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/584,617 filed Jan. 9, 2012, entitled "Energy Exchange System for Conditioning Air in an Enclosed Structure," all of which are hereby expressly incorporated by reference in their entireties.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The subject matter described herein relates generally to an energy exchange system for conditioning air in an enclosed structure, and more particularly, to an energy exchange system having at least one energy recovery device and a moisture control loop, which may circulate a liquid desiccant, for example.

Enclosed structures, such as occupied buildings, factories and animal barns, generally include a heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system for conditioning ventilated and/or recirculated air in the structure. The HVAC system includes a supply air flow path and a return and/or exhaust air flow path. The supply air flow path receives air, for example outside or ambient air, re-circulated air, or outside or ambient air mixed with re-circulated air, and channels and distributes the air into the enclosed structure. The air is conditioned by the HVAC system to provide a desired temperature and humidity of supply air discharged into the enclosed structure. The exhaust air flow path discharges air back to the environment outside the structure, or ambient air conditions outside the structure. Without energy recovery, conditioning the supply air typically requires a significant amount of auxiliary energy. This is especially true in environments having extreme outside or ambient air conditions that are much different than the required supply air temperature and humidity. Accordingly, energy exchange or recovery systems are typically used to recover energy from the exhaust air flow path. Energy recovered from air in the exhaust flow path is utilized to reduce the energy required to condition the supply air.

Conventional energy exchange systems may utilize energy recovery devices (for example, energy wheels and permeable plate exchangers) or heat exchange devices (for example, heat wheels, plate exchangers, heat-pipe exchangers and run-around heat exchangers) positioned in both the supply air flow path and the exhaust air flow path. Liquid-to-Air Membrane Energy Exchangers (LAMEEs) are fluidly coupled so that a desiccant liquid flows between the LAMEEs in a run-around loop, similar to run-around heat exchangers that typically use aqueous glycol as a coupling fluid. When the only auxiliary energy used for such a loop is for desiccant liquid circulation pumps and external air-flow fans, the run-around system is referred to as a passive run-around membrane energy exchange (RAMEE) system, otherwise it is an active RAMEE system with controlled auxiliary heat and/or water inputs or extractions.

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For the passive RAMEE system with one or more LAMEEs in each of the exhaust and supply air ducts, energy in the form of heat and water vapor is transferred between the LAMEEs in the supply and exhaust ducts, which is interpreted as the transfer of sensible (heat) and latent (moisture) energy between the exhaust air and the supply air. For example, the exhaust air LAMEE may recover heat and moisture from the exhaust air to transfer the heat and moisture to the supply air during winter conditions to heat and humidify the supply air. Conversely, during summer conditions, the supply air LAMEE may transfer heat and moisture from the supply air to the exhaust air to cool and dehumidify the supply air.

A Dedicated Outdoor Air System (DOAS) is an example of an HVAC system that typically does not return conditioned air back to the supply stream, but typically conditions ambient air to desired supply air conditions through a combination of heating, cooling, dehumidification, and/or humidification. A typical DOAS may include a vapor compression system or a liquid desiccant system. When the ambient air is hot and humid, the vapor compression system cools the supply air down to its dewpoint in order to dehumidify the air, which typically overcools the air. This process is inefficient because the air typically is reheated before it is supplied.

On the other hand, a liquid desiccant system does not overcool the supply air. However, traditional liquid desiccant systems typically require significantly more energy to condition the air. Moreover, a liquid desiccant system is generally a direct contact system, which is susceptible to transporting aerosolized desiccant downstream, where it may damage HVAC equipment.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Certain embodiments provide an energy exchange system that includes a supply air flow path, an exhaust air flow path, an energy recovery device disposed within the supply and exhaust air flow paths, and a supply conditioning unit disposed within the supply air flow path. The supply conditioning unit may be downstream from the energy recovery device. The system may also include a regenerator disposed within the exhaust air flow path, and a liquid handling device in fluid communication with the supply conditioning unit and the regenerator. The regenerator may be configured to be operated during off-hours to regenerate a desiccant circulated by the liquid handling device. The liquid handling device may contain and circulate one or more of liquid desiccant, water, glycol.

The liquid handling device may include a liquid source. A concentration of liquid within the liquid handling device may be configured to be adjusted through the liquid source.

The liquid handling device may include a moisture transfer loop in fluid communication with a supply loop and a regenerator loop.

The liquid handling device may include a first heat exchanger in a supply fluid path, a second heat exchanger in an exhaust fluid path, and a conditioner, such as a heat exchange device, that circulates heat transfer fluid between the first and second heat exchangers.

The system may also include at least one more conditioner downstream or upstream of the first and second heat exchangers.

The system may also include a moisture transfer loop in fluid communication with a supply loop and a regenerator loop. The moisture transfer loop may include a desiccant supply conduit and a desiccant return conduit. At least

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portions of the desiccant supply conduit and the desiccant return conduit may contact one another in a manner that facilitates thermal energy transfer therebetween. The desiccant supply conduit may be formed concentric within, or concentric to, the desiccant return conduit. The desiccant supply conduit may be arranged co-radial with the desiccant return conduit with flow occurring in opposite directions through the desiccant supply and return conduits.

The supply conditioning unit may include a liquid-to-air membrane energy exchanger (LAMEE).

The system may also include a return air duct that fluidly connects the supply air flow path and the exhaust air flow path. The return air duct may connect to the supply air flow path downstream from the supply conditioning unit.

The system may also include at least one post-conditioner disposed in one or both of the supply air flow path or the return air duct.

The system may also include a pre-conditioner disposed downstream of the energy recovery device and upstream of the supply conditioning unit in the supply air flow path. The system may also include a pre-conditioner disposed downstream of the energy recovery device and the regenerator in the exhaust air flow path.

The system may also include a remote conditioner.

In an embodiment, the supply air flow path and the exhaust air flow path may be connected to a plurality of zone conditioners. The plurality of zone conditioners may include the supply conditioning unit. That is, the supply conditioning unit may be one of the plurality of zone conditioners.

The system may also include at least one control unit that monitors and controls operation of the system. The at least one control unit may operate the system to selectively control one or both of humidity or temperature.

Certain embodiments provide an energy exchange system that includes a supply air flow path, an exhaust air flow path, a supply conditioning unit disposed within the supply air flow path, a regenerator disposed within the exhaust air flow path, and a liquid handling device in fluid communication with the supply conditioning unit and the regenerator. The liquid handling device may include a moisture transfer loop. The liquid handling device may include first and second heat exchangers in fluid communication with a first heat exchange fluid conditioner.

Certain embodiments provide an energy exchange system that includes a supply air flow path, an exhaust air flow path, an energy recovery device disposed within the supply and exhaust air flow paths, a supply liquid-to-air membrane energy exchanger (LAMEE) disposed within the supply air flow path, wherein the supply LAMEE is downstream from the energy recovery device, an exhaust liquid-to-air membrane energy exchanger (LAMEE) disposed within the exhaust air flow path, and a liquid handling device in fluid communication with the supply LAMEE and the exhaust LAMEE. The liquid handling device may include a moisture transfer loop in fluid communication with a supply loop and a regenerator loop.

Certain embodiments provide a method of conditioning air comprising introducing outside air as supply air into a supply air flow path, pre-conditioning the supply air with an energy recovery device, and fully-conditioning the supply air with a supply conditioning unit that is downstream from the energy recovery device.

The method may also include regenerating desiccant contained within a liquid handling device with a regenerator disposed within the exhaust air flow path.

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The method may also include circulating the desiccant through a moisture transfer loop that is in fluid communication with a supply loop and a regenerator loop.

The method may also include adjusting a concentration of liquid within the liquid handling device.

The method may also include shunting a portion of the exhaust air from the exhaust air flow path to the supply air flow path through a return air duct.

The method may also include directing the portion of the exhaust air to at least one post-conditioner disposed in one or both of the supply air flow path or the return air duct.

The method may also include monitoring and controlling operation with a control unit. The method may also include selectively controlling one or both of humidity or temperature with the control unit.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 2 illustrates a schematic view of a liquid handling device, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 3 illustrates a schematic view of a liquid handling device, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 4 illustrates a schematic view of a liquid handling device, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 5 illustrates a schematic view of the energy recovery device, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 6 illustrates an isometric top view of a LAMEE, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 7 illustrates an isometric view of a LAMEE having a cutout along the line 7-7 shown in FIG. 6, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 8 illustrates a front view of panels shown in FIG. 7, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 9 illustrates a front view of panels shown in FIG. 7, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 10 illustrates a front view of panels shown in FIG. 7, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 11 illustrates a front view of a moisture transfer loop, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 12 illustrates an axial cross-section of a pipe section of a moisture transfer loop, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 13 illustrates a psychrometric chart of supply air process lines for an energy exchange system, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 14 illustrates a schematic view of a desiccant handling device, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 15 illustrates a schematic view of a desiccant handling device, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 16 illustrates a schematic view of a desiccant handling device, according to an embodiment.

FIG. 17 illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system according to an embodiment.

FIG. 18 illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system according to an embodiment.

FIG. 19 illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system according to an embodiment.

FIG. 20 illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system according to an embodiment.

FIG. 21 illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system according to an embodiment.

FIG. 22 illustrates a schematic of an energy exchange system according to an embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing summary, as well as the following detailed description of certain embodiments will be better understood

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when read in conjunction with the appended drawings. As used herein, an element or step recited in the singular and proceeded with the word “a” or “an” should be understood as not excluding plural of said elements or steps, unless such exclusion is explicitly stated. Furthermore, references to “one embodiment” are not intended to be interpreted as excluding the existence of additional embodiments that also incorporate the recited features. Moreover, unless explicitly stated to the contrary, embodiments “comprising” or “having” an element or a plurality of elements having a particular property may include additional such elements not having that property.

FIG. 1 illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system 100 according to an embodiment. The system 100 is configured to partly or fully condition air supplied to a structure 102, such as a building or an enclosed room. The system 100 includes an air inlet 104 fluidly connected to a supply flow path 106. The supply flow path 106 may channel air 108 (such as ambient or outside air, air from a building adjacent to the enclosed structure 102, or return air from a room within the enclosed structure 102) to the enclosed structure 102. Air 108 in the supply flow path 106 may be moved through the supply flow path 106 by a fan or fan array 110. The illustrated embodiment shows the fan 110 located downstream of an energy recovery device 112 and a supply conditioning unit, such as a Liquid-to-Air Membrane Energy Exchange (LAMEE) 114. Optionally, the fan 110 may be positioned upstream of the energy recovery device 112 and/or the supply LAMEE 114. Also, alternatively, air 108 within the supply flow path 106 may be moved by multiple fans or a fan array or before and/or after the supply LAMEE 114.

Airflow passes from the inlet 104 through the supply flow path 106 where the air first encounters a process side or portion of the energy recovery device 112. As explained in more detail below, the energy recovery device 112 uses exhaust air to pre-condition the supply air within the flow path 106, thereby decreasing the amount of work that the supply LAMEE 114 performs to fully condition the supply air. For example, during a winter mode operation, the energy recovery device 112 may pre-condition the inlet air 108 within the supply flow path 106 by adding heat and moisture. In a summer mode operation, the energy recovery device 112 may pre-condition the air 108 by removing heat and moisture from the air. An additional energy recovery device (not shown) may be positioned downstream from the supply LAMEE 114, and upstream from the enclosed structure 102. Additionally, while the energy recovery device 112 is shown upstream of the supply LAMEE 114 within the supply flow path 106, the energy recovery device 112 may, alternatively, be positioned downstream of the supply LAMEE 114 and upstream of the enclosed structure 102.

After the supply air passes through the energy recovery device 112 in the supply flow path 106, the supply air, which at this point has been pre-conditioned, encounters the supply LAMEE 114. The supply LAMEE 114 then further or fully conditions the pre-conditioned air in the supply flow path 106 to generate a change in air temperature and humidity toward a desired supply state that is desired for supply air discharged into the enclosed structure 102. For example, during a winter mode operation, the supply LAMEE 114 may further condition the pre-conditioned air by adding heat and moisture to the pre-conditioned air in the supply flow path 106. In a summer mode operation, the supply LAMEE 114 may condition the pre-conditioned air by removing heat and moisture from the air in the supply flow path 106. Because the energy recovery device 112 has pre-conditioned

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the air before the air encounters the supply LAMEE 114, the supply LAMEE 114 does not have to work as hard to fully condition the air. The supply LAMEE 114 partially conditions the air in the supply flow path 106 by changing the temperature and moisture content by only a portion of the range between outside air temperature and moisture conditions and supply air discharge temperature and moisture conditions. The fully-conditioned supply air 116 then has the desired temperature and humidity for air that is supplied to the enclosed structure 102.

Exhaust or return air 118 from the enclosed structure 102 is channeled out of the enclosed structure 102, such as by way of exhaust fan 120 or fan array within an exhaust flow path 122. As shown, the exhaust fan 120 is located upstream of the energy recovery device 112 within the exhaust flow path 122. However, the exhaust fan 120 may be downstream of the energy recovery device 112 within the exhaust flow path 122. Additionally, the exhaust fan 120 may be located downstream of an exhaust LAMEE or regenerator 124 within the exhaust flow path 122. The regenerator 124 operates as a desiccant regenerator for desiccant that flows through the supply LAMEE 114. Optionally, the exhaust fan 120 may be downstream of the energy recovery device 112, but upstream of the regenerator 124 within the exhaust flow path 122.

Before encountering the regenerator 124, the exhaust air 118 first passes through a regeneration side or portion of the energy recovery device 112. The energy recovery device 112 is regenerated by the exhaust air 118 before pre-conditioning the supply air 108 within the supply flow path 106. After passing through the energy recovery device 112, the exhaust air 118 passes through the regenerator 124. Alternatively, however, the regenerator 124 may be located upstream of the energy recovery device 112 along the exhaust flow path 122.

A liquid handling device 126 may be connected between the supply LAMEE 114 and the regenerator 124. The liquid handling device 126 may be a liquid desiccant handling device (DHD). The liquid handling device 126 is configured to circulate a liquid, such as a liquid desiccant, between the supply LAMEE 114 and the regenerator 124 and to manage energy transfer therebetween.

The liquid handling device 126 sends and receives liquid, such as a desiccant, to and from the supply LAMEE 114 through outlet and inlet lines 128 and 130, respectively. The lines 128 and 130 may be pipes, conduits, or other such structures configured to convey liquid. Additionally, the liquid handling device 126 also sends and receives liquid, such as a desiccant, to and from the regenerator 124 through outlet and inlet lines 132 and 134, respectively. Similar to the lines 128 and 130, the lines 132 and 134 may be pipes, conduits, or other such structure configured to convey liquid.

The liquid handling device 126 may heat or cool the desiccant through a variety of systems, devices, and the like, such as chilled water tubes, waste heat, solar devices, combustion chambers, cogeneration, and the like. The concentration of the desiccant within the liquid handling device 126 may be controlled by diluting it with water and/or cycling it to a regenerator or exhaust LAMEE, such as the regenerator 124.

The desiccant fluid repeatedly flows between the supply LAMEE 114 and the regenerator 124 to transfer heat and moisture between the supply LAMEE 114 and the regenerator 124. As the desiccant fluid flows between the supply LAMEE 114 and the regenerator 124, the desiccant transfers heat and moisture between the supply air 108 and the return air 118.

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FIG. 2 illustrates a schematic view of the liquid handling device 126, according to an embodiment. The liquid handling device 126 may include a conditioner 136, such as a heat transfer device, a liquid source 138, numerous desiccant pipes or conduits, and several heat exchangers. Liquid, such as the desiccant, enters the liquid handling device 126 from the supply LAMEE 114 through the inlet line 130. Desiccant, or water, may be supplied to the liquid handling device 126 through the liquid source 138.

The liquid source 138 may be a device that may add and/or remove external water and/or desiccant to and from the liquid handling device 126. The liquid source 138 may be in fluid communication with the outlet and inlet lines 132 and 134, respectively. Optionally, the liquid source 138 may be in fluid communication with one or both of the outlet and inlet lines 128 and 130, respectively.

After passing into the liquid handling device 126 from the supply LAMEE 114, the desiccant then passes into a heat exchanger 140, which brings the desiccant into close contact with the heat transfer fluid, such as a refrigerant, water, glycol, or the like, in order to facilitate heat transfer therebetween. The heat transfer fluid is supplied to the heat exchanger 140 through the conditioner 136, such as a heat transfer device. The temperature of the desiccant changes as it passes through the heat exchanger 140. After passing through the heat exchanger 140, the desiccant then passes to the regenerator 124 by way of the outlet line 132.

Desiccant coming from the regenerator 124 passes into the liquid handling device 126 through the inlet line 134. The desiccant is then channeled into a heat exchanger 142, which also brings the desiccant into close contact with the heat transfer fluid, such as refrigerant, water, glycol, or the like, in order to facilitate heat transfer therebetween. As such, the temperature of the desiccant passing through the heat exchanger 142 changes before it passes into the outlet line 128, and into the supply LAMEE 114.

As shown, the liquid handling device 126 may be fluidly connected to one or more peripheral conditioners 144 that are located in air flow paths. The peripheral conditioners 144 may utilize liquid desiccant and may connect to lines 128 and 130 through pipes, conduits, or the like. Alternatively, the peripheral conditioners 144 may use heat transfer fluid from the conditioner 136, such as a heat transfer device, that flows through connective pipes or conduits.

The liquid handling device 126 may also include additional conditioners 144 and 146. The conditioners 144 and 146 may circulate the heat transfer fluid between the conditioner 136 to points before and after the heat exchangers 140 and 142. The conditioner 144 may circulate the heat transfer fluid proximate the inlet line 130 upstream of the heat exchanger 140. Additionally, the conditioner 144 may circulate the heat transfer fluid proximate the outlet line 128 downstream of the heat exchanger 142. In both instances, the conditioner 144 adds another level of heat transfer before and after the main conditioner 136. Similarly, the conditioner 146 may circulate the heat transfer fluid proximate the outlet line 132 downstream of the heat exchanger 140. Additionally, the conditioner 146 may circulate the heat transfer fluid proximate the inlet line 134 upstream of the heat exchanger 142. In both instances, the conditioner 146 adds another level of heat transfer before and after the main conditioner 136.

The conditioner 136, such as a heat transfer device, and the conditioners 144 and 146 may be contained within the liquid handling device 126. Optionally, the conditioner 136 and conditioners 144 and 146, or portions thereof, may be external to the liquid handling device 126. The conditioner

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136, for example, may include a compressor, reversing valve, throttling valve, and piping, which, when combined with the heat exchangers 140 and 142 and charged with a refrigerant acts as a heat pump. Alternatively, the liquid handling device 126 may include a chilled water source from internal or external sources (for example, an internal chiller, solar adsorption chiller, geothermal source, or the like), and a hot water source from an external source, such as a boiler, combustion cycle device, solar energy, waste heat, geothermal source, or the like.

FIG. 3 illustrates a schematic view of the liquid handling device 126, according to an embodiment. In this embodiment, desiccant enters the liquid handling device 126 from the supply LAMEE 114 through the inlet line 130, which is fluidly connected to the heat exchanger 140. The desiccant then flows through the outlet line 128 back to the supply LAMEE 114. The inlet line 130, the heat exchanger 140 and the outlet line 128 form a supply loop 147. Similarly, desiccant from the regenerator 124 enters the liquid handling device 126 through the inlet line 134, which is fluidly connected to the heat exchanger 142, which is, in turn, fluidly connected to the outlet line 132. As such, the inlet line 134, the heat exchanger 142, and the outlet line 132 form a regenerator loop 149. The conditioner 136 and the heat exchangers 140, 142 operate similar to as described above. The liquid source 138 may also be used to add and/or remove external water and/or desiccant to and from the liquid handling device 126. The liquid handling device 126 may also be connected to peripheral conditioners, as described above.

As shown in FIG. 3, a moisture transfer loop 148 includes a heat exchanger 150 and pipes, conduits, or the like that fluidly connect the supply loop 147 to the regenerator loop 149. Desiccant may flow from the supply loop 147 to the regenerator loop 149 through a conduit 152 that is connected between the supply loop 147 and the heat exchanger 150, and a conduit 154 that is connected between the heat exchanger 150 and the regenerator loop 149. Similarly, desiccant may flow from the regenerator loop 149 through a conduit 156 that is connected between the regenerator loop 149 and the heat exchanger 150, and a conduit 158 that is connected between the heat exchanger 150 and the supply loop 147.

The amount of desiccant flowing through the moisture transfer loop 148 may be a small fraction of the desiccant flowing through the supply loop 147 and the regenerator loop 149. The desiccant flow rate in the moisture transfer loop 148 may be as great or greater, however, as the flow rate of desiccant through the supply and regenerator loops 147 and 149, respectively. The moisture transfer loop 148 enables desiccant and/or water to be transferred between the supply loop 147 and the regenerator loop 149. The heat exchanger 150 may be used to regulate the heat transfer between the supply loop 147 and the regenerator loop 149, thereby improving the efficiency of the system. Alternatively, the heat exchanger 150 may not be included in the moisture transfer loop 148.

FIG. 4 illustrates a schematic view of the liquid handling device 126, according to an embodiment. The liquid handling device 126 may be connected between the supply LAMEE 114 and the regenerator 124. Similar to the embodiments described above, the liquid handling device 126 is configured to circulate desiccant between the supply LAMEE 114 and the regenerator 124 and to manage energy transfer therebetween. In this embodiment, the heat transfer device or conditioner and the heat exchangers may be configured as a heat pump 160 that is in fluid communication

with a supply loop **162** and a regenerator loop **164**. The liquid handling device **126** may also include a moisture transfer loop **166** fluidly coupled in parallel with the heat pump **160** between the supply and regenerator loops **162** and **164**. The loops **162**, **164**, and **166** are formed of conduits that are configured to allow desiccant to pass through internal passages. The heat pump **160** is used to heat or cool the desiccant as it flows through the supply and regenerator loops **162** and **164**. However, the liquid handling device **126** may, optionally, heat or cool the desiccant through a variety of other systems, devices, and the like, such as chilled water tubes, waste heat, solar devices, combustion chambers, cogeneration, and the like. The concentration of the desiccant within the liquid handling device **126** may be controlled by a variety of methods, such as diluting it with water, adding concentrated or weak desiccant, adding solid desiccant, and/or cycling it to a regenerator, such as the regenerator **124**.

Referring to FIGS. 1-4, in the embodiments, the desiccant fluid repeatedly flows between the supply LAMEE **114** and the regenerator **124** to transfer heat and moisture between the supply LAMEE **114** and the regenerator **124**. As the desiccant fluid flows between the supply LAMEE **114** and the regenerator **124**, it transfers heat and moisture between the supply air **108** and the exhaust air **118**.

Referring to FIGS. 2-4, while not shown, the liquid handling device **126** may include one or more desiccant pumps, storage tanks, reservoirs, and the like. The pumps, storage tanks, and/or reservoirs may be disposed within and/or connected to any of the pipes or conduits of the systems.

Additionally, if the liquid handling device **126** contains storage devices, such as reservoirs, the regenerator **124** may be operated during off hours to regenerate the desiccant. During off-hour operations, the conditioner **136**, such as a heat transfer device, provides cooling or heating, depending on demands, to the regenerator loop **164**, for example, through the heat exchanger **142**. In embodiments in which the conditioner **136** includes a compressor and the heat transfer fluid is a refrigerant, a heat exchanger that is external to the system, such as a scavenger coil, may be used to transfer heat with the environment.

FIG. 5 illustrates a schematic view of the energy recovery device **112**, according to an embodiment. A portion of the energy recovery device **112** is disposed within the supply flow path **106**, while another portion of the energy recovery device **112** is disposed within the exhaust flow path **122**. The energy recovery device **112** is configured to transfer heat and/or moisture between the supply flow path **106** and the exhaust flow path **122**. The energy recovery device **112** may be one or more of various types of energy recovery devices, such as, for example, an enthalpy wheel, a sensible wheel, a desiccant wheel, a plate heat exchanger, a plate energy (heat and moisture) exchanger, a heat pipe, a run-around loop, a passive RAMEE, or the like. As shown in FIG. 5, the energy device **112** may be an enthalpy wheel.

An enthalpy wheel is a rotary air-to-air heat exchanger. As shown, supply air within the supply air path **106** passes in a direction counter-flow to the exhaust air within exhaust air path **119**. For example, the supply air may flow through the lower half of the wheel, while the exhaust air flows through the upper half of the wheel. The wheel may be formed of a heat-conducting material with an optional desiccant coating.

In general, the wheel may be filled with an air permeable material resulting in a large surface area. The surface area is the medium for sensible energy transfer. As the wheel rotates between the supply and exhaust air flow paths **106** and **122**,

respectively, the wheel picks up heat energy from the hotter air stream and releases it into the colder air stream. Enthalpy exchange may be accomplished through the use of desiccants on an outer surface, and/or in an air permeable material, of the wheel. Desiccants transfer moisture through the process of adsorption, which is driven by the difference in the partial pressure of vapor within the opposing air streams.

Additionally, the rotational speed of the wheel also changes the amount of heat and moisture transferred. A slowly-turning desiccant coated wheel primarily transfers moisture. A faster turning desiccant coated wheel provides for both heat and moisture transfer.

Optionally, the energy recovery device **112** may be a sensible wheel, a plate exchanger, a heat pipe, a run-around apparatus, a refrigeration loop having a condenser and evaporator, a chilled water coil, or the like.

Alternatively, the energy recovery device **112** may be a flat plate exchanger. A flat plate exchanger is generally a fixed plate that has no moving parts. The exchanger may include alternating layers of plates that are separated and sealed. Because the plates are generally solid and non-permeable, only sensible energy is transferred. Optionally, the plates may be made from a selectively permeable material that allows for both sensible and latent energy transfer.

Also, the energy recovery device **112** may be a heat exchanger, such as shown and described in U.S. application Ser. No. 12/910,464 entitled "Heat Exchanger for an Equipment Rack," filed Oct. 22, 2010, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

Alternatively, the energy recovery device **112** may be a run-around loop or coil. A run-around loop or coil includes two or more multi-row finned tube coils connected to each other by a pumped pipework circuit. The pipework is charged with a heat exchange fluid, typically water or glycol, which picks up heat from the exhaust air coil and transfers the heat to the supply air coil before returning again. Thus, heat from an exhaust air stream is transferred through multi-row finned tube coils or pipework coil to the circulating fluid, and then from the fluid through the multi-row finned tube pipework or pipework coil to the supply air stream.

Also, alternatively, the energy recovery device **112** may be a heat pipe. A heat pipe includes a sealed pipe or tube made of a material with a high thermal conductivity such as copper or aluminum at both hot and cold ends. A vacuum pump is used to remove all air from the empty heat pipe, and then the pipe is filled with a fraction of a percent by volume of coolant, such as water, ethanol, etc. Heat pipes contain no mechanical moving parts. Heat pipes employ evaporative cooling to transfer thermal energy from one point to another by the evaporation and condensation of a working fluid or coolant.

Referring again, to FIG. 1, as outdoor air enters the supply flow path **106** through the inlet **104**, the unconditioned air encounters the energy recovery device **112**, which may be an enthalpy wheel, flat plate exchanger, heat pipe, run-around, or the like, as discussed above. If the air is hot and humid, one or both of the temperature and humidity of the supply air is lowered by the energy recovery device **112**. Sensible and/or latent energy from the supply air is transferred to the energy recovery device **112**, thereby lowering the temperature and/or humidity of the supply air. In this manner, the supply air is preconditioned before it encounters the supply LAMEE **114**.

If, however, the supply air is cold and dry, the temperature and/or humidity of the supply air will be raised as it encounters the energy recovery device 112. As such, in winter conditions, the energy recovery device 112 warms and/or moisturizes the supply air.

A similar process occurs as the exhaust air encounters the energy recovery device 112 in the exhaust flow path 122. The sensible and/or latent energy transferred to the energy recovery device 112 in the exhaust flow path 122 is then used to pre-condition the air within the supply flow path 106. Overall, the energy recovery device 112 pre-conditions the supply air in the supply flow path 106 before it encounters the supply LAMEE 114, and alters the exhaust air in the flow path 122 before it encounters the regenerator 124. In this manner, the LAMEE 114 and the regenerator 124 do not use as much energy as they normally would if the energy recovery device 112 was not in place. Therefore, the LAMEE 114 and the regenerator 124 run more efficiently.

As noted above, however, the supply LAMEE 114 may be upstream of the energy recovery device 112 within the supply flow path 106. Similarly, the regenerator 124 may be upstream of the energy recovery device 112 within the exhaust flow path 122, or in a separate airstream (such as a scavenger or ambient airstream).

After passing through the energy recovery device 112 in the supply flow path 106, the pre-conditioned air next encounters the supply LAMEE 114, which fully conditions the supply air to the desired conditions.

FIG. 6 illustrates an isometric top view of a LAMEE 600 according to an embodiment. The LAMEE 600 may be used as the supply air LAMEE 114 and/or the return or exhaust air LAMEE 124 (shown in FIG. 1). The LAMEE 600 includes a housing 602 having a body 604. The body 604 includes an air inlet end 606 and an air outlet end 608. A top 610 extends between the air inlet end 606 and the air outlet end 608. A stepped-down top 612 is positioned at the air inlet end 606. The stepped-down top 612 is stepped a distance 614 from the top 610. A bottom 616 extends between the air inlet end 606 and the air outlet end 608. A stepped-up bottom 618 is positioned at the air outlet end 608. The stepped-up bottom 618 is stepped a distance 620 from the bottom 616. In alternative designs the stepped-up 618 or stepped-down 612 sections may have different sizes of steps or no step at all.

An air inlet 622 is positioned at the air inlet end 606. An air outlet 624 is positioned at the air outlet end 608. Sides 626 extend between the air inlet 622 and the air outlet 624. Each panel in the LAMEE 600 has a semi-permeable membrane length 664, as shown in FIG. 7. Also shown in FIG. 7, each panel in the LAMEE 600 has a semi-permeable membrane height 662 defining an energy exchange area that extends a height (H) between a top and a bottom defined by the top and bottom of the semi-permeable membrane. The energy exchange area extends a length (L) between a front and a back that is defined by the front and the back of the semi-permeable membrane. An exchanger aspect ratio (AR) is defined by a height (H) 662 of each semi-permeable membrane energy exchange area divided by a length (L) 664 of the energy exchange area.

An energy exchange cavity 630 extends through the housing of the LAMEE 600. The energy exchange cavity 630 extends from the air inlet end 606 to the air outlet end 608. An air stream 632 is received in the air inlet 622 and flows through the energy exchange cavity 630. The air stream 632 is discharged from the energy exchange cavity 630 at the air outlet 624. The energy exchange cavity 630 includes a plurality of panels 634. Each liquid flow panel

forms a liquid desiccant channel 676 that is confined by the semi-permeable membranes 678 on either side and is configured to carry desiccant 641 therethrough. The semi-permeable membranes 678 are arranged in parallel to form air channels 636 with an average flow channel width of 637 and liquid desiccant channels 676 with an average flow channel width of 677. The air stream 632 travels through the air channels 636 between the semi-permeable membranes 678. The desiccant 641 in each desiccant channel 676 exchanges heat and moisture with the air stream 632 in the air channels 636 through the semi-permeable membranes 678.

A desiccant inlet reservoir 638 is positioned on the stepped-up bottom 618. The desiccant inlet reservoir 638 extends a length 639 of the LAMEE body 604. The desiccant inlet reservoir 638 extends a length 639 that is configured to meet a predetermined performance of the LAMEE 600.

The liquid desiccant inlet reservoir 338 is configured to receive desiccant 341 from the liquid handling device 126, shown in FIGS. 1-4. The desiccant inlet reservoir 638 includes an inlet 642 in flow communication with a storage tank. The desiccant 641 is received through the inlet 642. The desiccant inlet reservoir 638 includes an outlet 644 that is in fluid communication with the desiccant channels 676 in the energy exchange cavity 630. The liquid desiccant 641 flows through the outlet 644 into the desiccant channels 676. The desiccant 641 flows along the panels 634 through desiccant channel 676 to a desiccant outlet reservoir 646. The desiccant outlet reservoir 646 is positioned on the stepped-down top 612 of the LAMEE housing 602. Alternatively, the desiccant outlet reservoir 646 may be positioned at any location along the top 612 of the LAMEE housing 602 or alternatively on the side of the reservoir with a flow path connected to all the panels. The desiccant outlet reservoir 646 has a height 648. The desiccant outlet reservoir 646 extends along the top 612 of the LAMEE housing 602 for a length 650. The desiccant outlet reservoir 646 is configured to receive desiccant 641 from the desiccant channels 676 in the energy exchange cavity 630. The desiccant outlet reservoir 646 includes an inlet 652 in flow communication with the desiccant channels 676. The desiccant 641 is received from the desiccant channels 676 through the inlet 652. The desiccant outlet reservoir 646 includes an outlet 654. In an alternative embodiment, the desiccant outlet reservoir 646 may be positioned along the bottom 618 of the LAMEE housing 602 and the desiccant inlet reservoir 638 may be positioned along the top 610 of the LAMEE housing 602.

In the illustrated embodiment, the LAMEE 600 includes one liquid desiccant outlet reservoir 646 and one liquid desiccant inlet reservoir 638. Alternatively, the LAMEE 600 may include liquid desiccant outlet reservoirs 646 and liquid desiccant inlet reservoirs 638 on the top and bottom of each end of a LAMEE 600.

FIG. 7 illustrates an isometric view of the LAMEE 600 having a cutout along the line 7-7 shown in FIG. 6. The top 610 and the bottom 618 of the LAMEE housing 602 include insulation 660 joined thereto. The sides 626 of the LAMEE housing 602 also include insulation 660. Except for the air inlet and outlet areas, the insulation 660 extends around the energy exchange cavity 630. The insulation 660 limits an amount of heat that may be exchanged between the air and liquid desiccant flowing through the energy exchange cavity and the surroundings as the air and liquid desiccant flow through the channels in the energy exchange cavity compared to the heat rate for the air for the supply and exhaust air flows. The insulation 660 may include foam insulation,

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fiber insulation, gel insulation, or the like. The insulation 660 is selected to at least partially meet a predetermined performance of the LAMEE 600.

The energy exchange cavity 630 has a height 662, a length 664, and a width 666. The height 662 is defined between the top and bottom of the energy exchange cavity 630. The width 666 is defined between the insulation side walls of the energy exchange cavity 630. The length 664 is defined between the air inlet 622 and the air outlet 624 of the energy exchange cavity 630. Each energy exchange panel 634 extends the height 662 and length 664 of the energy exchange cavity 630. The panels 634 are spaced along the width 666 of the energy exchange cavity 630.

For a counter/cross flow LAMEE, the liquid desiccant flow inlet 634 of the desiccant inlet reservoir 638 is in flow communication with the energy exchange cavity 630 at the air outlet end 608 of the LAMEE 600. The liquid desiccant outlet 652 of the desiccant outlet reservoir 646 is in flow communication with the energy exchange cavity 630 at the air inlet end 606 of the LAMEE 600. The desiccant inlet reservoir 638 and the desiccant outlet reservoir 646 are in fluid communication with the liquid channel 676. The panels 634 define a non-linear liquid desiccant flow path 668 between the desiccant inlet reservoir 638 and the desiccant outlet reservoir 646. The flow path 668 illustrates one embodiment of a counter/cross flow path with respect to the direction of the air stream 632. In one embodiment, a desiccant flow direction through the desiccant channels 676 is controlled so that lower density desiccant flows separately from higher density desiccant.

FIG. 8 illustrates a front view of the panels 634. The panels 634 are spaced to form air channels 636 and the liquid desiccant channels 676 there-between separated by semi-permeable membranes 678. The air channels 636 alternate with the liquid desiccant channels 676. Except for the two side panels of the energy exchange cavity, each air channel 636 is positioned between adjacent liquid desiccant channels 676. The liquid desiccant channels 676 are positioned between adjacent air channels 636. The air channels 636 have an average channel width 637 defined between adjacent panels 634. The membranes 678 separate the air from the desiccant. Accordingly, the membranes 678 prevent the desiccant from migrating into the air.

The LAMEE 600 is further described in PCT application No. PCT/US11/41397 entitled "Liquid-To-Air Membrane Energy Exchanger," filed Jun. 22, 2011, which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety.

FIG. 9 illustrates a simplified front view of a panel 634, according to an embodiment. In this embodiment, a plastic inner channel 940 or tube contains liquid coolant, such as water, glycol, or the like. An outer membrane 942 surrounds the plastic inner channel 940 such that fluid cavities 944 are formed between both outer surfaces of the plastic channel 940 and the inner surfaces of the membrane 944. Desiccant flows through the fluid cavity 944. The coolant within the plastic channel 940 absorbs the latent energy from moisture when the moisture is absorbed by the desiccant and also provides sensible cooling.

FIG. 10 illustrates a simplified front view of a panel 634 according to an embodiment. In this embodiment, a plastic layer 1046 separates the two layers of the membrane 1048 into a desiccant flow path 1050 and a water flow path 1052. Purge air 1056 is adjacent the membrane 1048 proximate the water flow path 1052, while air 1056 is adjacent the membrane 1048 proximate the desiccant flow path 1050.

Referring again to FIG. 1, the supply LAMEE 114 is configured to fully-condition the pre-conditioned supply air

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after it passes through the energy recovery device 112 in the supply flow path 106. The supply LAMEE 114 is connected to the liquid handling device 126, which, in turn, is connected to the regenerator 124. The pre-conditioned supply air within the flow path 106 is fully conditioned through the liquid desiccant that is exchanged between the supply LAMEE 114 and the regenerator 124 by way of the liquid handling device 122.

Liquid desiccant within the supply LAMEE 114 passes out of the LAMEE 114 into inlet line 130. At this point, the temperature and water content of the liquid desiccant have both changed, as latent and sensible energy has been transferred from the pre-conditioned air to the liquid desiccant. The pre-conditioned air has now become fully-conditioned and passes out of the LAMEE 114 toward the enclosed structure 102.

The desiccant then passes through the inlet line 130 toward the liquid transfer device 126, such as shown and described in any of FIGS. 2-4. As discussed with respect to FIGS. 3 and 4, in particular, the liquid handling device 126 may include a moisture transfer loop in fluid communication with a supply loop and a regenerator loop.

FIG. 11 illustrates a front view of a conceptual illustration of a moisture transfer loop 1128, according to an embodiment. The moisture transfer loops shown and described with respect to FIGS. 3 and 4, for example, may be similar to the moisture transfer loop 1128.

The moisture transfer loop 1128 may include a supply inlet 1162 in fluid communication with the inlet line 130 (shown in FIG. 1). A portion of the desiccant solution within the inlet line 130 from the supply LAMEE 114 enters the inlet 1162. The inlet 1162 is part of a coiled pipe 1164 that extends along another coiled pipe 1166 that receives desiccant solution from the regenerator 124. The pipes 1164 and 1166 may be formed together or separate, but engage one another in a manner that facilitates thermal energy transfer therebetween. In general, the desiccant solution entering at inlets 1162 and 1169 have different temperatures and moisture contents. As the desiccant solutions flow in opposed directions (as noted by arrows 1163 and 1165), the temperature difference therebetween reduces, such that the desiccant solution exiting at outlet 1168 is relatively close to the temperature of the desiccant solution at the outlet 1170. The temperatures of the desiccants within adjacent pipes 1164 and 1166 will tend to begin to balance or equilibrate. Thus, if the desiccant within the pipe 1164 is hotter than the desiccant in the pipe 1166, the temperature of the desiccant within the pipe 1164 will decrease as it moves toward the outlet 1168, while the temperature of the desiccant within the pipe 1166 will increase as it moves toward the outlet 1170. Similarly, as desiccant solution from the supply loop discharges at outlet 1168 into the regenerator loop, and as desiccant solution from the regenerator loop discharges at outlet 1170 into the supply loop, moisture is exchanged therebetween. This will facilitate moisture transfer between the supply and regenerator loops without affecting the temperature of the solution in the supply and regenerator loops. In this manner, the moisture absorbed into the desiccant solution from the supply LAMEE 114 in the supply loop is transferred to the regenerator loop through the moisture loop 1128, with minimal heat transfer between the supply and regenerator loops.

FIG. 12 illustrates an axial cross-section of a pipe section of a moisture transfer loop 1128 according to an embodiment. In this embodiment, supply desiccant pipe 1164 is formed to be concentric and co-radial with a regenerator exhaust desiccant pipe 1166. As shown, the supply pipe 1164

is within the regenerator pipe **1166** (although this orientation may be reversed). Therefore, exhaust desiccant solution flows outside of the supply pipe **1164** in an opposite direction from that of the supply desiccant solution within the supply pipe **1164**. In this manner, sensible energy is transferred between the counter-flowing desiccant solutions.

Referring again to FIGS. **1**, **3**, **4**, **11**, and **12** as desiccant from the supply LAMEE **114** passes along the moisture transfer loop **148**, **166**, or **1128**, the temperature of the desiccant solution tend toward equilibrium with that of the desiccant solution from the regenerator **124** that passes into the moisture transfer loop **148**, **166**, or **1128**. The supply desiccant solution (in the summer, for example, the temperature of the desiccant passing out of outlet **1168** will be less than that entering the inlet **1162**, and vice versa in the winter) then passes into additional conditioning devices, as described with respect to FIGS. **3** and **4**, where it is further conditioned before it passes into the regenerator **124**.

As the conditioned desiccant enters the regenerator **124**, latent and sensible energy from the desiccant within the LAMEE **124** is exchanged with the exhaust air passing through the LAMEE **124**. The desiccant then absorbs or desorbs energy, depending on the temperature and humidity of the exhaust air within the exhaust flow path **122**, and passes into an outlet of the LAMEE **124**. In a similar fashion as described above with respect to the moisture transfer loop **1128**, a portion of the desiccant from the LAMEE **124** enters the moisture transfer loop **148**, **166**, or **1128** and tends to equilibrate with the supply desiccant.

As noted, in an embodiment, only a portion of the desiccant from the supply LAMEE **114** and a portion of the desiccant from the regenerator **124** enters the moisture transfer loop **148**, **166**, or **1128**. However, the bulk of the desiccant passes directly into the heat exchangers **140** or **142** that are connected to the conditioner **136**, such as a heat transfer device, as discussed with respect to FIGS. **3** and **4**, for example, which conditions the desiccant. Nevertheless, the moisture transfer loop **148**, **166**, or **1128** provides a system that enables the conditioning device, such as the heat pump **160** shown in FIG. **4** to operate more efficiently.

Additionally, the moisture transfer loop is configured to transfer moisture between the supply and regenerator loops. As an example, during dehumidification, desiccant passing through the supply LAMEE **114** is diluted (decreased in concentration), while the desiccant passing through the regenerator **124** is concentrated. If the supply and regenerator loops are not connected, their concentrations continuously change until they are in equilibrium with their respective airstream and no longer exchange moisture. Connecting the two loops together with the moisture transfer loop allows some of the dilute desiccant from the supply loop to be replaced with some concentrated desiccant from the regenerator loop, and vice versa. The transfer maintains the desired desiccant concentration in the two loops. Also, the mass flow rate of salt between the two loops is equal, thereby resulting in a net moisture transfer from the supply loop to the regenerator loop (in the case of winter) due to the two loops being at different concentrations.

Table 1 shows exemplary temperatures and humidities of air at various points within the system **100** as shown in FIG. **1** (during summer conditions for 2000 cfm):

TABLE I

Point	Temperature	Humidity (grams/kg)
A	35.0° C.	16.8 g/kg
B	26.0° C.	10.9 g/kg

TABLE I-continued

Point	Temperature	Humidity (grams/kg)
C	21.1° C.	7.1 g/kg
D	24.0° C.	9.3 g/kg
E	33.0° C.	15.2 g/kg
F	40.5° C.	18.9 g/kg

As shown in Table 1, the temperature and humidity of the supply air at point A is higher than the pre-conditioned air at point B, which is immediately downstream of the energy recovery device **112**. Similarly, the fully-conditioned air at point C, just downstream from the supply LAMEE **114**, exhibits a lower temperature and lower humidity relative to the pre-conditioned air at point B.

Next, the exhaust air at point D in the flow path **122** exhibits a lower temperature and lower humidity relative to the air at point E, just downstream of the energy recovery device **112**. This is due to the fact that latent and sensible energy transferred from the supply air in the flow path **1106** to the energy recovery device **112** is then transferred to the exhaust air in the flow path **122**. As such, the heat and humidity of the energy recovery device **112** is lowered, and the energy recovery device **112** is then equipped to receive additional sensible and latent energy from the supply air within the flow path **106**.

Additionally, the temperature and humidity of the exhaust air within the flow path **122** is higher at point F, than at point E. This is because desiccant within the regenerator **124** having relatively high sensible and latent energy transfers a portion of those energies to the exhaust air, which is then vented to the atmosphere, while the desiccant is cooled and dried, and sent back to the liquid handling device **126**.

If, however, winter conditions existed in which the incoming supply air was to be heated and humidified, the data would exhibit the opposite trend. That is, at point A, the air temperature would be cooler and drier than at point C, for example. Further, the temperature and humidity at point D would be warmer and more humid than at point F.

Table 2 shows exemplary desiccant solution conditions of air at various points within the liquid handling device **126** (during summer conditions for 2000 cfm) as shown in FIG. **4**, for example:

TABLE 2

Point	Temperature	% Desiccant of Fluid Solution
1	20.7° C.	30.5%
2	23.4° C.	30.4%
3	23.6° C.	30.5%
4	41.2° C.	31.7%
5	37.9° C.	31.7%
6	37.7° C.	31.7%

As shown above, at point 1 in the liquid handling device **126** shown in FIG. **4**, the temperature of the desiccant is lower prior to entering the supply LAMEE **114**, then when it exits the supply LAMEE **114** into the inlet line **130** at point 2. Additionally, a point 3, where the desiccant from the regenerator **124** intermingles with the majority of the desiccant from the supply LAMEE **114**, the temperature is slightly higher than at point 2.

Also, the temperature of the desiccant at point 4, just prior to it entering the regenerator **124** is higher than the temperature of the desiccant at point 5, after the desiccant passes out of the LAMEE **124** into the inlet line **134**. However, the temperature of the desiccant at point 6, where it intermingles

with desiccant from the supply LAMEE 114 that has passed out of the moisture transfer loop 148, is slightly less than at point 5.

Again, though, if winter conditions existed, the data trend would essentially be the opposite.

Similarly, with respect to FIG. 3, at point 1 in the liquid handling device 126 shown in FIG. 4, the temperature of the desiccant is lower prior to entering the supply LAMEE 114, then when it exits the supply LAMEE 114 into the inlet line 130 at point 2. Additionally, at point 3, where the desiccant from the regenerator 124 that passes through the moisture transfer loop 148 intermingles with the desiccant in the supply loop 147, the temperature is slightly higher than at point 2.

Also, the temperature of the desiccant at point 4, just prior to it entering the regenerator 124 is higher than the temperature of the desiccant at point 5, after the desiccant passes out of the LAMEE 124 into the inlet line 134. However, the temperature of the desiccant at point 6, where it intermingles with portion of the desiccant from the supply LAMEE 114 that has passed out of the moisture transfer loop 148, is slightly less than at point 5.

Again, though, if winter conditions existed, the data trend would essentially be the opposite.

Table 3 below shows the energy transfer between various points in the system 100 (during summer conditions for 2000 cfm):

TABLE 3

From	To	Energy Transfer
A	B	-27.5 kW (-7.8 tons)
B	C	-16.4 kW (-4.6 tons)
D	E	27. kW 97.8 tons)
E	F	19.5 kW (5.5 tons)
3	1	-17.3 kW (-4.9 tons)
6	4	20.6 kw (5.9 tons)

Again, though, if winter instead of summer, the data trend would essentially be the opposite.

FIG. 13 illustrates a psychometric chart of supply air process lines for the energy exchange system 100 (summer conditions), shown in FIG. 1, according to an embodiment. As shown by line segment 1302, the energy recovery device 112, such as an enthalpy wheel, performs a substantial amount of work in reducing the temperature and humidity of the outdoor air 1306 that enters the system 100 through the inlet 104 (shown in FIG. 1). Indeed, the energy recovery device 112 performs greater than 50% of the work in reducing the temperature and humidity of the air, as shown by point 1308, which represents the temperature and humidity of the supply air at point B (shown in FIG. 1), for example. Therefore, the work performed by the LAMEE 114, shown by line segment 1304, is substantially reduced. The system 100 efficiently utilizes the supply LAMEE 114, so that the supply LAMEE 114 does not have to bear the entire burden of reducing the temperature and humidity of the outdoor air from point 1306 to point 1310. Instead, the supply LAMEE 114 works to reduce the temperature and humidity of the air from point 1308 to point 1310, while the energy recovery device 112 reduces the temperature and humidity of the air from point 1306 to 1308. Because the energy recovery device 112 uses substantially less energy than the supply LAMEE 114, the system 100 works in a much more efficient manner than if no energy recovery device were used.

It has been found that the system 100 may achieve combined efficiency (CEF) values that exceed 20, which is significantly higher than conventional energy exchange configurations that typically have CEF values ranging from 12-15. Additionally, it has been found that when the liquid handling device 126 includes a heat pump (such as shown in FIG. 4), the coefficient of performance (COP)/energy efficient ratio (EER) of the heat pump within the system 100 is higher as compared to conventional energy exchange configurations.

FIG. 14 illustrates a schematic view of the liquid handling device 1422, according to an embodiment. The liquid handling device 1422 may be a passive system that does not include a heat pump. Instead, the liquid handling device 1422 may include a supply LAMEE 1408 in fluid communication with a desiccant reservoir 1480, which is, in turn, in fluid communication with an exhaust LAMEE 1420. In this embodiment, desiccant flows from the LAMEE 1408 into a desiccant supply line 1482 that directly connects the LAMEE 1408 to the LAMEE 1420. The desiccant passes through the LAMEE 1420 and into a desiccant return line 1484 in which the reservoir 1480 is disposed. The desiccant then passes through the return line 1484 into the supply LAMEE 1408, where the process continues.

FIG. 15 illustrates a schematic view of a liquid handling device 1522, according to an embodiment. In this embodiment, there are no desiccant reservoirs or heat pump. Instead, the desiccant supply line 1586 connects the supply LAMEE 1508 to the exhaust LAMEE 1520, while the desiccant return line 1588 connects the exhaust LAMEE 1520 to the supply LAMEE 1508. The lines 1586 and 1588 meet up at the moisture transfer loop 1528, as shown and described above.

FIG. 16 illustrates a schematic view of a liquid handling device 1622, according to an embodiment. In this embodiment, desiccant reservoirs 1680 are disposed in both the desiccant supply line 1690 and return line 1692. Further, the lines meet up at the moisture transfer loop 1628, as shown and described above.

Referring to FIGS. 1 and 14-16, if the system 100 uses additional desiccant storage devices, such as the reservoirs 1480 and 1680 shown in FIGS. 14 and 16, the regenerator may be operated during off hours to regenerate the desiccant. During off-hour operation, the conditioner or heat exchange device provides heating or cooling, depending on demands, to the regenerator loop, for example, through a heat exchanger. In embodiments in which the conditioner includes a compressor and the heat transfer fluid is a refrigerant, a heat exchanger that is external to the system, such as a scavenger coil, may be used to transfer heat with the environment.

Referring again to FIG. 1, the system 100 may include multiple supply air paths 106 and multiple exhaust air paths 122. Multiple paths may merge or funnel into a single flow path that connects to the paths 106 and 122 shown in FIG. 1. Alternatively, additional flow paths may be connected to parallel or serial to the paths shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 17 illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system 1700 according to an embodiment. The system 1700 is similar to the system 100, except that the system 1700 includes a post-conditioner 1702 downstream of the supply LAMEE 1708 in the supply flow path 1704. Additionally, a return air duct 1705 connects the exhaust flow path 1719 with the supply flow path 1704. In particular, the return air duct 1704 extends from a point that is upstream from the energy recovery device 1707 in the flow path 1719 to a point that is downstream the supply LAMEE 1708 in the

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supply path **1704**. A portion of the exhaust air that enters the flow path **1719** is shunted into the return air duct **1705** and passes to the post-conditioner **1702** with conditioned supply air. The post-conditioner **1702** then conditions this combined stream of air. Alternatively, the post-conditioner **1702** may be disposed in the air duct **1705**. Also, alternatively, the system **1700** may not include the return air duct **1705**.

The post-conditioner **1702** is connected to the liquid handling device **1722** through desiccant supply and return conduits. As such, the liquid handling device **1722** circulates desiccant or another heat transfer fluid to the post-conditioner **1702**. Accordingly, the post conditioner **1702** provides supplemental cooling or heating and/or humidification or dehumidification (depending on the time of year and the type of working fluid in the conditioner). In this manner, supply air that enters the supply flow path **1704** at the inlet **1702** is first pre-conditioned by the energy recovery device **1707**, then fully conditioned by the supply LAMEE **1708**, and then further conditioned by the post-conditioner **1702**.

The post-conditioner **1702** may be a heat exchanger, such as a liquid-to-gas coiled heat exchanger, or an energy exchanger, such as a LAMEE. The liquid handling device **1722** circulates either a desiccant or a heat transfer fluid to the post-conditioner **1702**. In one embodiment, the liquid handling device **1722** supplies desiccant directly to the post-conditioner **1702** from either a supply loop a regenerator loop.

FIG. **18** illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system **1800** according to an embodiment. The system **1800** is similar to the system **1700**, except that the post conditioner **1802** is disposed within the return air duct **1805**. Accordingly, the post conditioner **1802** conditions the shunted exhaust air within the return air duct **1805** before that air commingles with the fully-conditioned supply air within the supply flow path **1804**.

FIG. **19** illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system **1900** according to an embodiment. Similar to the system **100**, the system **1900** includes a supply flow path **1904**. A supply LAMEE **1908** is disposed within the supply flow path **1904**. An energy recovery device **1907** may be disposed upstream from the supply LAMEE **1908** in the supply flow path **1904**. Additionally, the energy recovery device **1907** may be upstream of a regenerator **1920** in an exhaust flow path **1919**. A liquid handling device **1922** is fluidly connected between the supply LAMEE **1908** and regenerator **1920**, respectively, as discussed above.

Additionally, a supply post-conditioner **1915** may be positioned downstream from the energy recovery device **1907**, but upstream from the supply LAMEE **1908** in the supply flow path **1904**. Further, an exhaust post-conditioner **1925** may be positioned downstream from the energy recovery device **1907**, but upstream from the regenerator **1920** in the exhaust air flow path **1919**. The post-conditioners **1915** and **1925** are fluidly connected by pipes or conduits to the liquid handling device **1922**. The post-conditioners **1915** and **1925** provide another level of conditioning that reduces the work load of the supply and exhaust LAMEEs **1908** and **1920**. The post-conditioners **1915** and **1925** provide sensible conditioning, but may also be able to provide latent conditioning.

Alternatively, the supply post-conditioner **1915** may be positioned upstream from the energy recovery device **1907**. Also, the exhaust post-conditioner **1925** may be positioned upstream from the energy recovery device **1907**. The post-conditioners **1915** and **1925** may be fluidly connected to the liquid handling device **1922** in a variety of ways.

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Optionally, the system **1900** may not include the energy recovery device **1907**. Also, alternatively, the system **1900** may not include the post-conditioners **1915** and/or **1925**.

FIG. **20** illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system **2000** according to an embodiment. The system **2000** is similar to the system **100**, except that an additional conditioner **2010**, that is remote from the system **2000**, is placed in the recirculation air flow path **2004** that is in fluid communication with the interior space **2001**. The remote conditioner **2010**, which could be a LAMEE, provides local sensible and latent conditioning directly to the interior space **2001**, in addition to the conditioning provided by the system **2000**. The remote conditioner **2010** is fluidly connected with the liquid handling device **2022** through pipes or conduits **20005** that transport desiccant solution, refrigerant, water, glycol, or the like.

FIG. **21** illustrates a schematic view of an energy exchange system **2100** according to an embodiment. In this embodiment, an energy recovery system **2121**, similar to the system **100**, provides sensible and latent conditioning to a plurality of zones, each having a separate and distinct zone conditioner **2122**, **2124**, and **2126**, which may be exchangers that can transfer sensible and possibly latent energies, such as a LAMEE or the like. The system **2100** may or may not include a supply LAMEE.

The energy recovery system **2121** is in fluid communication with a supply air line **2128**, which, in turn, branches off to each of the zone conditioners **2122**, **2124**, and **2126**. The zone conditioners **2122**, **2124**, and **2126** are each, in turn, connected to return line **2130** that is in fluid communication with an exhaust flow path of the energy recovery system **2121**. Accordingly, the system **2100** is configured to condition air within multiple zones or rooms.

The zone conditioners **2122**, **2124**, and **2126** are each fluidly connected to the liquid handling device **2122** through pipes or conduits **2105** that transport desiccant solution, refrigerant, water, glycol, or the like.

FIG. **22** illustrates a schematic of an energy exchange system **2200** according to an embodiment. In this embodiment, a computing device **2202** having a processing unit monitors and controls operation of the energy exchange system **2200**, which may be any of the systems **100**, **1700**, **1800**, **1900**, **2000**, or **2100** discussed above. The computing device **2202** may be used to control the energy recovery device (such as activation and rotation of an enthalpy wheel), the LAMEEs, the moisture control loops, conditioners, heat exchangers, fluid pumps, fluid control valves, and the like.

The computing device **2202** may be remotely located from the system **2200**, and may include a portable computer, a PDA, a cell phone, and the like. Optionally, the computing device **2202** may be a thermostat, humidistat, or the like, having a control unit that includes a processing unit. The computing device includes a processing unit, such as a central processing unit (CPU) that may include a microprocessor, a micro-controller, or equivalent control circuitry, designed specifically to control the system **2200**. The CPU may include RAM or ROM memory, logic and timing circuitry, state machine circuitry, and I/O circuitry to interface with the system **2200**.

The system **2200** may be operated such that the energy recovery device and the LAMEEs are operated simultaneously to provide both desired temperature and humidity to the enclosed space. Optionally, the computing device **2202** may be operated to selectively switch between the energy

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recovery device and the LAMEEs and/or other components to control either temperature or humidity independent of one another.

As explained above, embodiments provide an energy exchange system that includes one or both of an energy recovery device upstream of a conditioning unit, such as a LAMEE, and/or a liquid handling device that may include a moisture transfer loop.

As explained above, the energy recovery device uses exhaust air to pre-condition the supply air, thereby decreasing the amount of work that a LAMEE, for example, has to do to fully condition the supply air. The LAMEE further contributes to the efficiency of the system because the LAMEE does not over-cool the air during dehumidification. The membrane in the LAMEE separates the air from the desiccant, thereby preventing the transport of the desiccant in the air and resulting damage.

It should be noted that the LAMEEs and energy recovery devices shown and described are exemplary only and various other LAMEEs and recovery devices may be used with respect to the embodiments.

It is to be understood that the above description is intended to be illustrative, and not restrictive. For example, the above-described embodiments (and/or aspects thereof) may be used in combination with each other. In addition, many modifications may be made to adapt a particular situation or material to the teachings of the various embodiments of the invention without departing from their scope. While the dimensions and types of materials described herein are intended to define the parameters of the various embodiments of the invention, the embodiments are by no means limiting and are exemplary embodiments. Many other embodiments will be apparent to those of skill in the art upon reviewing the above description. The scope of the various embodiments of the invention should, therefore, be determined with reference to the appended claims, along with the full scope of equivalents to which such claims are entitled. In the appended claims, the terms “including” and “in which” are used as the plain-English equivalents of the respective terms “comprising” and “wherein.” Moreover, in the following claims, the terms “first,” “second,” and “third,” etc. are used merely as labels, and are not intended to impose numerical requirements on their objects. Further, the limitations of the following claims are not written in means-plus-function format and are not intended to be interpreted based on 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph, unless and until such claim limitations expressly use the phrase “means for” followed by a statement of function void of further structure.

This written description uses examples to disclose the various embodiments of the invention, including the best mode, and also to enable any person skilled in the art to practice the various embodiments of the invention, including making and using any devices or systems and performing any incorporated methods. The patentable scope of the various embodiments of the invention is defined by the claims, and may include other examples that occur to those skilled in the art. Such other examples are intended to be within the scope of the claims if the examples have structural elements that do not differ from the literal language of the claims, or if the examples include equivalent structural elements with insubstantial differences from the literal languages of the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An energy exchange system comprising:
 - a supply air flow path;
 - an exhaust air flow path;

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an energy recovery device disposed within the supply and exhaust air flow paths;

a supply liquid-to-air membrane energy exchanger (LAMEE) disposed within the supply air flow path and configured to exchange at least one of latent and sensible energy between a liquid desiccant and air separated by a semi-permeable membrane within the supply LAMEE, wherein the supply LAMEE is downstream from the energy recovery device;

an exhaust LAMEE disposed within the exhaust air flow path and configured to exchange at least one of latent and sensible energy between a liquid desiccant and air separated by a semi-permeable membrane within the exhaust LAMEE; and

a liquid handling device that receives liquid desiccant from the supply LAMEE and the exhaust LAMEE, the liquid handling device comprising:

a first heat exchanger that receives and modulates a temperature of liquid desiccant received from the supply LAMEE;

a second heat exchanger that receives and modulates a temperature of liquid desiccant received from the exhaust LAMEE; and

a conditioner connected to and circulating a heat transfer fluid between the first and second heat exchangers.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the liquid handling device comprises a moisture transfer loop in fluid communication with a supply loop connected to the supply LAMEE and a regenerator loop connected to the exhaust LAMEE.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein the moisture transfer loop comprises a desiccant supply conduit connected to the supply loop to receive liquid desiccant from the supply LAMEE and a desiccant return conduit connected to the regenerator loop to receive liquid desiccant from the exhaust LAMEE, wherein at least portions of the desiccant supply conduit and the desiccant return conduit contact one another in a manner that facilitates heat transfer between the desiccant received from the supply LAMEE and the desiccant received from the exhaust LAMEE.

4. The system of claim 1, further comprising a return air duct that fluidly connects the supply air flow path and the exhaust air flow path, wherein the return air duct connects to the supply air flow path downstream from the supply conditioning unit.

5. The system of claim 1, further comprising a post-conditioner disposed downstream of the energy recovery device and upstream of the supply LAMEE in the supply air flow path.

6. The system of claim 1, further comprising a remote conditioner connected to the liquid handling device to provide local sensible and latent conditioning directly to an interior space of a building.

7. The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one control unit that monitors and controls operation of the system, wherein the at least one control unit operates the system to selectively control one or both of humidity or temperature.

8. An energy exchange system comprising:

a supply air flow path;

an exhaust air flow path;

a supply liquid-to-air membrane energy exchanger (LAMEE) disposed within the supply air flow path and configured to exchange at least one of latent and sensible energy between a liquid desiccant and air separated by a semi-permeable membrane within the supply LAMEE;

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- an exhaust LAMEE disposed within the exhaust air flow path and configured to exchange at least one of latent and sensible energy between a liquid desiccant and air separated by a semi-permeable membrane within the exhaust LAMEE;
- a liquid handling device in fluid communication with the supply LAMEE and the exhaust LAMEE, wherein the liquid handling device comprises a moisture transfer loop, and wherein the moisture transfer loop comprises a desiccant supply conduit that receives liquid desiccant from the supply LAMEE and a desiccant return conduit that receives liquid desiccant from the exhaust LAMEE, wherein at least portions of the desiccant supply conduit and the desiccant return conduit contact one another in a manner that facilitates heat transfer between the desiccant received from the supply LAMEE and the desiccant received from the exhaust LAMEE.
9. The system of claim 8, further comprising a remote conditioner connected to the liquid handling device to provide local sensible and latent conditioning directly to an interior space of a building.
10. An energy exchange system comprising:
- a supply air flow path;
 - an exhaust air flow path;
 - an energy recovery device disposed within the supply and exhaust air flow paths;
 - a supply liquid-to-air membrane energy exchanger (LAMEE) disposed within the supply air flow path and configured to exchange at least one of latent and sensible energy between a liquid desiccant and air separated by a semi-permeable membrane within the

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- supply LAMEE, wherein the supply conditioning unit is downstream from the energy recovery device;
 - an exhaust LAMEE disposed within the exhaust air flow path and configured to exchange at least one of latent and sensible energy between a liquid desiccant and air separated by a semi-permeable membrane within the exhaust LAMEE; and
 - a liquid handling device in fluid communication with the supply LAMEE and the exhaust LAMEE, the liquid handling device comprising:
 - a first heat exchanger in a supply fluid path connected to the supply LAMEE;
 - a second heat exchanger in an exhaust fluid path connected to the exhaust LAMEE;
 - a conditioner connected to and circulating a heat transfer fluid between the first and second heat exchangers; and
 - a moisture transfer loop in fluid communication with the supply fluid path and the exhaust fluid path and configured to exchange heat between liquid desiccant from the supply LAMEE and liquid desiccant from the exhaust LAMEE.
11. The system of claim 10, wherein the moisture transfer loop comprises:
- a desiccant supply conduit that receives liquid desiccant from the supply LAMEE and a desiccant return conduit that receives liquid desiccant from the exhaust LAMEE, wherein at least portions of the desiccant supply conduit and the desiccant return conduit contact one another in a manner that facilitates heat transfer between the desiccant from the supply LAMEE and the desiccant from the exhaust LAMEE.

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